



THE INDEPENDENT



Gunfire: the new Mersey sound

The gang wars of Liverpool

Minister in secret alert on job losses

Leaked letter reveals concern

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, has sent a confidential note to ministerial colleagues warning that manufacturing industry is threatened with a sharp fall in jobs during the run-up to the next election.

Mr Lang has forwarded to the Treasury a pessimistic assessment by his officials of the prospects for the manufacturing sector after exposing a startling discrepancy between official figures for manufacturing output and those for jobs.

The assessment is attached to a note from Mr Lang - both documents leaked to the *Independent* - expressing concern to William Waldegrave, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, over what he calls the "puzzle" of why manufacturing employment last recorded its sharpest annual increase in 20 years at a time when output was static or falling.

The official draft of the March issue of the Department of Trade and Industry's *Monthly Economic Assessment* - an internal Whitehall bulletin produced by the department's economists for circulation to the Treasury, Bank of England and other government departments - warns that the "balance of risks" suggests that employment in manufacturing will start to fall. While it rose dramatically last year, the trend of manufacturing employment has been downward for three decades.

The bulletin says the "continued sluggishness of our European markets and the substantial stock over-hang [the building up of stocks as demand

fails to match production] present considerable threats to future output." It adds that recent surveys by both the Confederation of British Industry and the British Chambers of Commerce "indicate that firms are expecting to shed labour over the coming months".

Ian McCartney, Labour's employment spokesman, seized on the leak as evidence of widespread job insecurity and that there was a "feel-bad factor" in



Ian Lang: Pessimistic over manufacturing prospects.

much of industry. He said: "This correspondence belies what ministers are saying in public. In public they are talking up the economy but in private they are much more worried. This exposes their fear of being found out."

Most of the DTI's official assessment is taken up with a detailed exploration of possible reasons for the apparent conflict within the statistics and concludes, in the words of Mr Lang's summary, "that either manufacturers are extremely optimistic about future pros-

pects or that we should expect to see employment falling over the next few months".

But the officials' assessment makes clear they see the prospect of falling employment is much more likely given that any suggestion of optimism by manufacturers "about the prospects for rapid future demand growth" is not borne out by evidence from the CBI's survey of business prospects.

The officials also give a markedly sober view of manufacturing prospects, pointing out that the net result of rising employment and falling output is "falling productivity" with the result that unit wage costs were 4.5 per cent higher in the last quarter of last year than a year earlier.

It points out that manufacturing investment rose by 8.5 per cent in 1995 compared with the Treasury forecast of 10 per cent and that it actually fell by 9 per cent in the last quarter of 1995. It adds: "Manufacturing investment is of course notoriously volatile. Nonetheless the severity of the fall casts further doubt about the underlying health of the manufacturing sector."

The assessment analysis examines other possible explanations for the apparent growth in employment and slowing of output. One is that there may be classification discrepancies, with some sectors being classified as manufacturing for some purposes and service industries for others.

A survey report entitled *Stressed Out*, which was produced for the charity ChildLine, pinpoints parental pressure, fears about the future and the lack of anyone to talk to as key sources of stress among pupils.

Children as young as seven are so stressed by school work and exams that some of them consider suicide, according to a report published today.

Mounting pressure for academic success has made school work the number one worry in children's lives. A survey report entitled *Stressed Out*, which was produced for the charity ChildLine, pinpoints parental pressure, fears about the future and the lack of anyone to talk to as key sources of stress among pupils.

The majority of children who called the charity's helpline in distress over their schoolwork were aged 14 to 16, but ChildLine has had calls from some pupils as young as 12 who were already afraid of not getting into university. The youngest caller was seven.

One girl, called Susie, tried to hang herself because of the pressure of GCSEs before ringing ChildLine last year. Others were in tears when they called, many had played truant to avoid stressful work and 13 said they were contemplating suicide.

More than 1.25 million pupils are preparing to sit exams this summer. Of the 17,000 children who called ChildLine about problems with school in 1994-95, just 196 were primarily concerned about work and exams - far less than for bullying, abuse or relationships.

A survey of 1,000 children carried out for the report found that 79 per cent worried about exams and schoolwork "more than about anything else in their lives". John Hall, the report's author, said the figures suggest many children are able to cope with exam pressures

with the help of friends, teachers and parents. But he added: "The children who call ChildLine are the ones who feel unable to share their worries with anyone else or who have tried and found their listeners unsympathetic."

Parents with high expectations can make matters worse when what they see as encouragement is interpreted by the child as yet more pressure to succeed.

One tearful 15-year-old girl told ChildLine that her mother had told her she would have to leave home if she failed to get straight A grades in her GCSEs.

Others said their parents put pressure on them to achieve what they themselves had failed to achieve at school.

Violent schoolboy, page 5

IN BRIEF

Euphoric Italy
Despite the fragility of the centre-left victory in the elections, a wave of euphoria swept over Italy yesterday indicating the arrival of something truly new in the country's politics. Page 10

Teachers criticised
Teachers who have voted to go on strike in a dispute over a disruptive 13-year-old boy were criticised by politicians from both main parties. Page 5

Landmine stand
Britain is today expected to announce a change in its policy on anti-personnel landmines, and to tell the United Nations Weapons Convention Review Conference, which opened in Geneva yesterday, that it will support a world-wide ban on their manufacture, export and use. Page 9

Long haul to peace
US negotiators face an uphill struggle to win a ceasefire in Lebanon. Page 11

Mitterrand's memoirs
The recollections of the former French president François Mitterrand contain his last words on two big controversies of his later years: the Vichy regime and accusations that he "misread history" by resisting the reunification of Germany. Page 13

Today's weather
Dry and bright weather should spread from the west during the day. Section Two, page 25

Police quizzed over child assaults

ROGER DOBSON

Allegations of child abuse were made against both serving and former police officers during the North Wales child abuse inquiry.

The allegations were referred to the Police Complaints Authority, but the PCA decided there was insufficient evidence for any action. The PCA did not hold a so-called supervised inquiry, but examined the case notes.

The team of three child care experts who carried out a two-year inquiry into abuse at homes in Clwyd say they are concerned that no mechanism exists for mandatory independent investigations.

The Clwyd report says: "The role of the police in the recent investigation, as in any large

Victims of the abusers

child protection inquiry, is crucial. The independent panel is concerned that there appears to be no mechanism to ensure that independent investigations are conducted of allegations made against former and serving police officers and that the police authority handling of investigations can in some circumstances avoid public scrutiny."

Later the report says that the police took 3,755 statements during the inquiry, and adds: "Of the number of statements taken, it is not clear how many were forwarded to the prosecution service for consideration."

The Clwyd report says: "The role of the police in the recent investigation, as in any large

inquiry into the category of general misunderstanding."

A PCA spokesman said: "Allegations of child abuse were made against both serving and former police officers in the North Wales abuse inquiry but were not substantiated."

"We saw all the cases and went right through them. We believe they were investigated to the best of the ability of the police service given the very long passage of time. It was not a supervised inquiry. They were internal inquiries but when they were completed they were examined by the PCA."

It also emerged yesterday that the Government and council officials are to study the case of a former children's home manager jailed in Glasgow for 15 years for a catalogue of

abuse against boys. Peter Harley, 50, of Cardiff, had admitted at a previous hearing 17 indecency charges involving boys aged six to 16, over a five-year period from 1977-1982.

At the High Court in Glasgow the judge, Lord Weir, said the case raised the questions of how such a man came to be in charge of a children's home - and why the children were unable to get help over the years of abuse.

Four Labour MPs will today meet William Hague, the Secretary of State for Wales, to call for the publication of the report by a team chaired by John Jollings, former director of social work in Derbyshire.

The deputation, led by Labour's health spokesman in

TURN TO PAGE 2

It is also unclear how many other professionals, including police officers, were named in the statements as perpetrators of assaults."

A spokesman for North Wales Police said yesterday: "In the context of the Jollings report, all allegations were investigated and the case papers submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service. Allegations against serving officers were additionally examined by the independent Police Complaints Authority."

"The Jollings report's com-

ments on police complaints fall into the category of general misunderstanding."

The PCA spokesman said: "Allegations of child abuse were made against both serving and former police officers in the North Wales abuse inquiry but were not substantiated."

"We saw all the cases and went right through them. We believe they were investigated to the best of the ability of the police service given the very long passage of time. It was not a supervised inquiry. They were internal inquiries but when they were completed they were examined by the PCA."

It also emerged yesterday that the Government and council officials are to study the case of a former children's home manager jailed in Glasgow for 15 years for a catalogue of

abuse against boys. Peter Harley, 50, of Cardiff, had admitted at a previous hearing 17 indecency charges involving boys aged six to 16, over a five-year period from 1977-1982.

At the High Court in Glasgow the judge, Lord Weir, said the case raised the questions of how such a man came to be in charge of a children's home - and why the children were unable to get help over the years of abuse.

Four Labour MPs will today meet William Hague, the Secretary of State for Wales, to call for the publication of the report by a team chaired by John Jollings, former director of social work in Derbyshire.

TURN TO PAGE 2

It is also unclear how many other professionals, including police officers, were named in the statements as perpetrators of assaults."

A spokesman for North Wales Police said yesterday: "In the context of the Jollings report, all allegations were investigated and the case papers submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service. Allegations against serving officers were additionally examined by the independent Police Complaints Authority."

"The Jollings report's com-

ments on police complaints fall into the category of general misunderstanding."

The PCA spokesman said: "Allegations of child abuse were made against both serving and former police officers in the North Wales abuse inquiry but were not substantiated."

"We saw all the cases and went right through them. We believe they were investigated to the best of the ability of the police service given the very long passage of time. It was not a supervised inquiry. They were internal inquiries but when they were completed they were examined by the PCA."

It also emerged yesterday that the Government and council officials are to study the case of a former children's home manager jailed in Glasgow for 15 years for a catalogue of

abuse against boys. Peter Harley, 50, of Cardiff, had admitted at a previous hearing 17 indecency charges involving boys aged six to 16, over a five-year period from 1977-1982.

At the High Court in Glasgow the judge, Lord Weir, said the case raised the questions of how such a man came to be in charge of a children's home - and why the children were unable to get help over the years of abuse.

Four Labour MPs will today meet William Hague, the Secretary of State for Wales, to call for the publication of the report by a team chaired by John Jollings, former director of social work in Derbyshire.

TURN TO PAGE 2

It is also unclear how many other professionals, including police officers, were named in the statements as perpetrators of assaults."

A spokesman for North Wales Police said yesterday: "In the context of the Jollings report, all allegations were investigated and the case papers submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service. Allegations against serving officers were additionally examined by the independent Police Complaints Authority."

"The Jollings report's com-

ments on police complaints fall into the category of general misunderstanding."

The PCA spokesman said: "Allegations of child abuse were made against both serving and former police officers in the North Wales abuse inquiry but were not substantiated."

"We saw all the cases and went right through them. We believe they were investigated to the best of the ability of the police service given the very long passage of time. It was not a supervised inquiry. They were internal inquiries but when they were completed they were examined by the PCA."

It also emerged yesterday that the Government and council officials are to study the case of a former children's home manager jailed in Glasgow for 15 years for a catalogue of

abuse against boys. Peter Harley, 50, of Cardiff, had admitted at a previous hearing 17 indecency charges involving boys aged six to 16, over a five-year period from 1977-1982.

At the High Court in Glasgow the judge, Lord Weir, said the case raised the questions of how such a man came to be in charge of a children's home - and why the children were unable to get help over the years of abuse.

Four Labour MPs will today meet William Hague, the Secretary of State for Wales, to call for the publication of the report by a team chaired by John Jollings, former director of social work in Derbyshire.

TURN TO PAGE 2

It is also unclear how many other professionals, including police officers, were named in the statements as perpetrators of assaults."

A spokesman for North Wales Police said yesterday: "In the context of the Jollings report, all allegations were investigated and the case papers submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service. Allegations against serving officers were additionally examined by the independent Police Complaints Authority."

"The Jollings report's com-

ments on police complaints fall into the category of general misunderstanding."

The PCA spokesman said: "Allegations of child abuse were made against both serving and former police officers in the North Wales abuse inquiry but were not substantiated."

"We saw all the cases and went right through them. We believe they were investigated to the best of the ability of the police service given the very long passage of time. It was not a supervised inquiry. They were internal inquiries but when they were completed they were examined by the PCA."

It also emerged yesterday that the Government and council officials are to study the case of a former children's home manager jailed in Glasgow for 15 years for a catalogue of

abuse against boys. Peter Harley, 50, of Cardiff, had admitted at a previous hearing 17 indecency charges involving boys aged six to 16, over a five-year period from 1977-1982.

At the High Court in Glasgow the judge, Lord Weir, said the case raised the questions of how such a man came to be in charge of a children's home - and why the children were unable to get help over the years of abuse.

Four Labour MPs will today meet William Hague, the Secretary of State for Wales, to call for the publication of the report by a team chaired by John Jollings, former director of social work in Derbyshire.

TURN TO PAGE 2

It is also unclear how many other professionals, including police officers, were named in the statements as perpetrators of assaults."

A spokesman for North Wales Police said yesterday: "In the context of the Jollings report, all allegations were investigated and the case papers submitted to the Crown Prosecution Service. Allegations against serving officers were additionally examined by the independent Police Complaints Authority."

"The Jollings report's com-

ments on police complaints fall into the category of general misunderstanding."

The PCA spokesman said: "Allegations of child abuse were made against both serving and former police officers in the North Wales abuse inquiry but were not substantiated."

"We saw all the cases and went right through them. We believe they were investigated to the best of the ability of the police service given the very long passage of time. It was not a supervised inquiry. They were internal inquiries but when they were completed they were examined by the PCA."

It also emerged yesterday that the Government and council officials are to study the case of a former children's home manager jailed in Glasgow for 15 years for a catalogue of

abuse against boys. Peter Harley, 50, of Cardiff, had admitted at a previous hearing 17 indecency charges involving boys aged six to 16, over a five-year period from 1977-1982.

At the High Court in Glasgow the judge, Lord Weir, said the case raised the questions of how such a man came to be in charge of a children's home - and why the children were unable to get help over the years of abuse.

Four Labour MPs will today meet William Hague, the Secretary of State for Wales, to call for the publication of the report by a team chaired by John Jollings, former director of social work in Derbyshire.

Nurses' conference: Split with Unison as Royal College demands preferential treatment for its members

Minister heckled over local pay deals

BARRE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

Angry nurses yesterday warned the health minister that they should not be treated like other health workers over pay.

John Bowis, under-secretary of state for health, was heckled and barracked on the first day of the Royal College of Nursing annual congress in Bournemouth as he tried to explain the Government's move towards locally negotiated salaries.

And in her keynote speech Betty Kershaw, president of the college, made it clear that nurses wanted to be treated more like doctors who this year were awarded a nationwide increase.

Dr Kershaw reopened a wound with public service union Unison, attacking its agreement with health service management which provided for an element of pay bargaining at trust level. While Unison, which represents both nurses and ancillary staff, had struck a deal over locally negotiated pay, the RCN was opposed to it. Dr Kershaw told delegates:

"Nurses cannot be treated like other health care workers, because we aren't like other health care workers. This is the Royal College of Nursing. It isn't and never will be a Royal College of Health Workers."

To applause the college president emphasised that the RCN was a professional union. "The world's largest professional union."

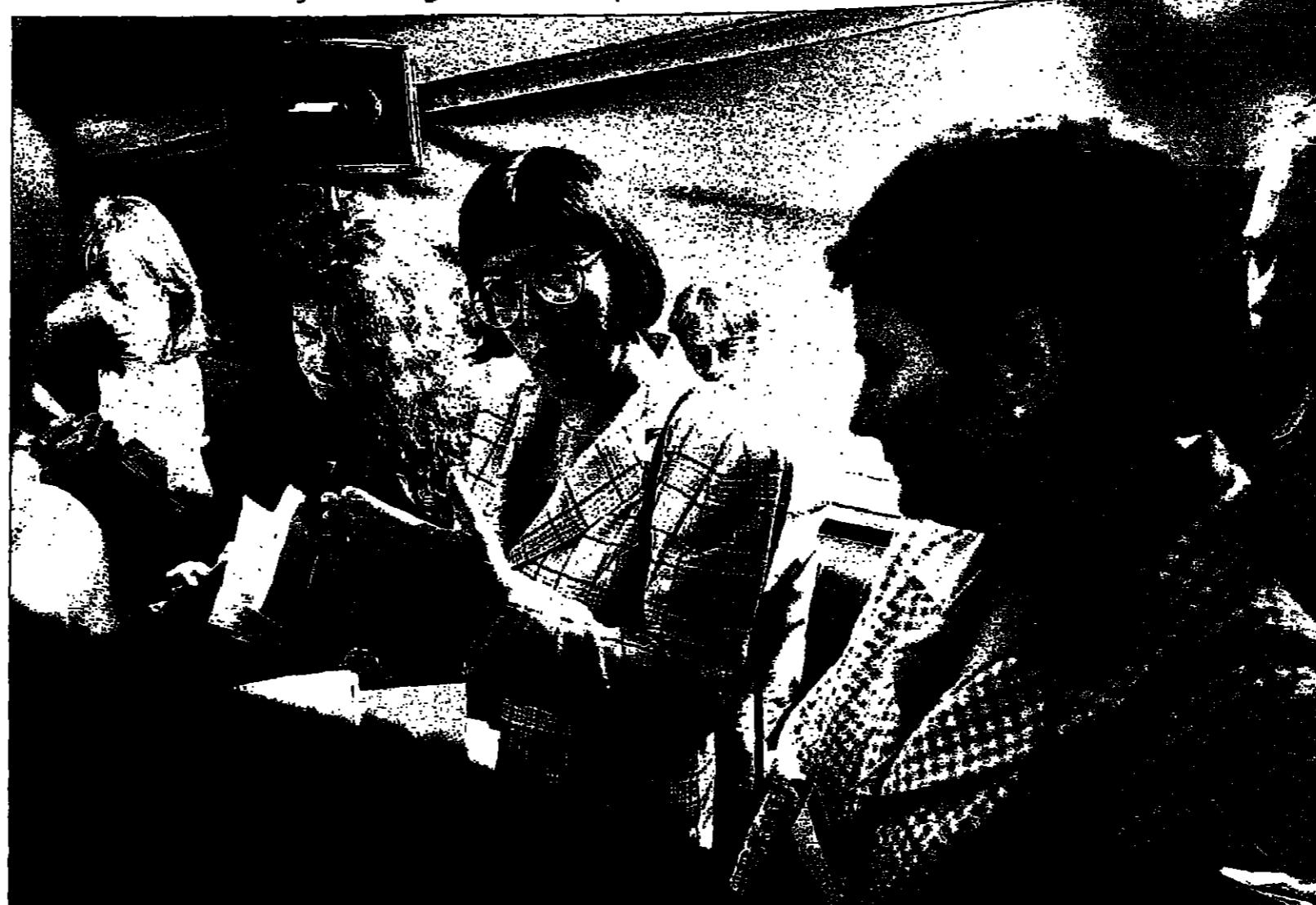
She reminded the minister that the conference this week would be debating professional issues and the trend towards

increasing medical responsibility for nurses. "You will be left in absolutely no doubt that nurses are a professional group and we should be treated as a professional group."

Responding to her assertions Bob Abberley, head of health at Unison, argued that it was "a time for unity, not throwing stones". Unison had thought it politic to negotiate a compromise over local pay rather than see a system imposed on health workers.

In a question and answer session which followed the RCN president's speech, comments by Mr Bowis were greeted with considerable scepticism by delegates. Asked whether the message from congress would be that people should vote Labour or Liberal Democrat, Christine Hancock, general secretary of the college, noticeably failed to reject such an interpretation.

She said: "There is no doubt they showed their concern about several of the Government's policies in particular real concern about the frag-



Carers' voice: Christine Hancock, general secretary of the RCN, talks to journalists in Bournemouth yesterday

Photograph: Andrew Henson

mentation of the health service and a significant part of that is the approach to pay."

The conference is due today to debate a motion proposing that the nurses' pay review body "is no longer an appropriate method of determining nurses' pay".

To cries of "rubbish" Mr

Bowis suggested that the present shortage of nurses was a local issue rather than a national one and that trusts had been given the flexibility on pay to address the problem.

He said there had been a real increase in nurses' pay of 70 per cent since the Conservatives

came to power in 1979. Under the last Labour Government their standard of living had fallen, he said.

The cool and sometimes noisy reception afforded Mr Bowis contrasted with a far more favourable response to Harriet Harman, Labour's

health spokeswoman, and Simon Hughes of the Liberal Democrats.

Mr Harman indicated that a Labour government might agree a degree of flexibility locally, but there would not be "hundreds of different pay scales" operated by different trusts all over the country.

Such a system inevitably led to "leap-frogging", "head-hunting" and nurses being forced to leave patients in order to negotiate their pay.

Mr Hughes said it was a "scandal" that local pay had been introduced and that the Liberal Democrats supported a system of national minimum wages which they would not expect to be topped up by trusts.

In opposition to the RCN president's call for a separation of the nurses away from other health workers, Mr Hughes said the NHS would be covered by one review body.

In its latest publication on the issue, the RCN said that such infections constituted a silent epidemic. Hospitals were "conducive to the development and spread of infection". Patients brought in their own bacteria from outside and were also subjected to micro-organisms in

the hospital environment. The document estimated that if one in five infections were prevented, more than £15m a year would be saved.

The manifesto said the number of patients waiting on trolleys before admission to a hospital bed was unacceptable, while the Patients' Charter stated that from April patients could expect to be given a bed within two hours if admitted to

hospital through an accident and emergency department. Nurses, however, reported that such standards were too often breached.

The document attacked the lack of national standards which left old people exposed to a "care lottery". It also called for a ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and coverage of tobacco-sponsored events on television.

Hospital bugs infect one in 10 patients

One in 10 patients contract serious infections while in hospital, according to the Royal College of Nursing, writes Barrie Clement.

As part of its National Manifesto launched yesterday, it challenged the Government to publish national data on what many RCN members believe is a growing problem.

Christine Hancock, general secretary of the RCN, said it was

the sickest patients, undergoing surgery or intravenous therapy who were the most vulnerable to infection. "They expect rightly that the hospital will treat them, not harm them."

The consequences of hospital acquired infection can be devastating - and even in rare circumstances fatal, as the recent publicity about killer bugs has highlighted.

Infection control was a key

measure of the quality of a hospital and needed to be taken just as seriously as waiting times or the number of patients treated.

In its latest publication on the issue, the RCN said that such infections constituted a silent epidemic. Hospitals were "conducive to the development and spread of infection". Patients brought in their own bacteria from outside and were also subjected to micro-organisms in

the hospital environment. The document estimated that if one in five infections were prevented, more than £15m a year would be saved.

The manifesto said the number of patients waiting on trolleys before admission to a hospital bed was unacceptable, while the Patients' Charter stated that from April patients could expect to be given a bed within two hours if admitted to

hospital through an accident and emergency department. Nurses, however, reported that such standards were too often breached.

The document attacked the lack of national standards which left old people exposed to a "care lottery". It also called for a ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and coverage of tobacco-sponsored events on television.

A sick horse means Shreeram faces ruin.



WORK in the suffocating heat and dust of Delhi's silica mines is hard and ill-paid. Without his mule, there will be no employment for Shreeram, no food for his wife and children. And if we do not provide regular, free veterinary help his emaciated mule will probably survive only two or three years of crippling labour before its agonised collapse and early death.

It is the same whether you are in Pakistan, in the rubble tips of Cairo or the scorching desert of Jordan, where poor people have neither the money nor the skill to care properly for their working animals. Were it not for the Brooke Hospital for Animals, the suffering of both man and beasts would be intolerable.

Please send what you can. We know how to make the most of every penny. With £25 we can give up to five days of hospital care which could save an animal's life. £2 is enough for the preventive treatment which protects a working horse or mule against infection.

The broken down horses and the struggling families who depend upon them, need your help. Fill in the coupon, now. Please.

Send what you can by cheque or credit card to: Richard Searight, Brooke Hospital for Animals, Dept. HID46, Broadmead House, 21 Panton St, London SW1Y 4DR.

Or call us on 0171 930 0210.

I want to help care for sick horses and donkeys.

I enclose a gift of: _____

Or debit my Access/Visa Card No: _____

Expiry date: _____ / _____

If you would like to make it payable to BROOKE HOSPITAL FOR ANIMALS, PLENTY BY CREDIT CARD, PLEASE GIVE THE ADDRESS WHERE YOU RECEIVE YOUR STATEMENT:

NAME: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

They depend on us - we depend on you

Lyell warns against beef 'revenge'

COLIN BROWN and
KATHERINE BUTLER

The Attorney General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, warned the Government yesterday that Britain would be on weak legal ground if it took retaliatory action against Europe over the ban on beef exports.

Sir Nicholas advised Cabinet colleagues that counter-measures would risk a legal challenge in the European Court of Justice and undermine Britain's

own case if it broke the law. However, despite his warning, ministers were refusing to rule out taking action.

The Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, attacked EU governments for the "positive absurdity" of banning British beef in the acknowledged absence of a threat to public health.

He steered clear of directly threatening retaliation in discussions with fellow ministers but later hinted that some form

of reprisal might be the only option left to Britain.

"I have no doubt that if it is not satisfactorily resolved it would have wider implications for Britain's relations with the EU. No country could accept an indefinite comprehensive ban when it is not required for public health reasons and when the Commission's own agriculture commissioner confirms that."

"We want to see a very early agreed outcome which will involve the lifting of the ban. That

is what ought to happen and it should happen in the near future. Of course, if it did not happen, inevitably other options would have to be looked at."

However, he took heart from sympathetic remarks made by both the EU Commission President, Jacques Santer, and the Italian Foreign minister, Sussanna Agnelli, who chaired yesterday's talks in Luxembourg.

Mr Santer said the Commission favoured an immediate removal of the ban on products con-

taining beef derivatives - in particular, medicines or pharmaceuticals. Mrs Agnelli urged foreign ministers to influence their governments to take the Commission's lead.

Ministers are pinning their hopes on today's talks between Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, and Franz Fischler, the European Commissioner for Agriculture, to get the ban lifted. Mr Hogg will present plans for a selective cull of cattle in "the low tens of thousands".

Catalogue of abuse in children's homes

| | Islington Council | Chwyd | Staffordshire | Leicestershire | Buckinghamshire | Dumfries and Galloway | Cheshire |
|-----------------|---|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| Date | Reports of abuse as early as 1978. Complaints made throughout 1980s. Inquiry in 1995 | 1970s and 1980s | 1983 to 1989 | 1973 - 1986 | 1980s and 1990s | 1977 to 1982 | 1970s and 1980s |
| Extent of abuse | At least 61 children abused by ring of paedophiles working inside and outside the council | Up to 200, in seven homes abused by a paedophile ring with members thought to have been in positions of influence. 12 of abused children have since died | More than 150 youngsters isolated in bare room, for periods ranging from one to 84 days, known as pindown | Frank Beck abused more than 100 children in his care at three homes | Allegations of abuse in five children's homes. Claims that boys imposed "sexual initiation rights" on girls. Also allegations about private home for mentally handicapped | Boys at Monklands Children Homes, aged between eight and 16, regularly abused. At least one victim attempted suicide | Children of all ages abused at a number of homes (which cannot be named for legal reasons) |
| Prosecutions | 32 council staff named in subsequent White paper but only one convicted of abuse. Received 3-month suspended prison sentence | 50 staff disciplined, 13 convictions. As many as 300 names believed to be involved. Councillor Stephen Morris, head of Carefirst home near Wrexham jailed for 10 years. | None. Two deputy directors of social services and three social workers involved were sacked | Beck given five life sentences in 1991. He died in prison in 1994 | None. | 3 Peter Harley, 50, jailed after admitting 16 charges of sexually abusing boys | Ongoing. |
| Inquiry | Conducted by Ian White, Oxfordshire's director of Social Services. Critical of the council's inadequate management. Warned that abusers who were not stopped might be working elsewhere | 14 reports, including 12 carried out internally, have never been published. Definitive 300-page report by three childcare experts remains unpublished | Written by Allan Levy, OC, and Barbara Kahan, then chairman of NCH, published in 1991. Called pindown | Two independent reports published in 1983. Police and social services criticised. Officers accused of incompetence, negligence and prejudice in dealing with trained staff | Two investigations, one into public homes and one into private mental home; owner committed suicide. No charges so far | Advocate Deputy Valerie Stacey said victims were systematically abused. Many placed in care after being abused at home | Ongoing. |

FROM-FRONT PAGE

Mr Hague has told the five councils which took over from Clwyd in local government reorganisation at the end of last month to urgently look at producing a publishable copy of the Jilings report that there should be a public judicial inquiry.

The report claims that the team did not get all the co-op-

eration they wanted while they were collecting evidence for the report.

One page says: "Our investigation was limited by a number of constraining factors. It was unclear to what extent material held by the North Wales

Police might be available to the independent panel, for example witness statements.

"Some former members of staff and members of staff representing other organisations declined to meet with the independent panel."

Molly Keane died

The writer Molly Keane has died at her home in Co Waterford, aged 92. Her works included the novels *Time After Time* and *Good Behaviour* which was short-listed for the Booker Prize in 1981, and filmed for television.

Obituary, Page 14

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria ... Sch40 Nt400

Belgium ... B40 Italy ... L400

Canada ... P400 Mexico ... Bc325

Cyprus ... C120 Malta ... 43 cent

Denmark ... D12 Norway ... Ma20

Irish Rep ... A40 Portugal ... Bc325

France ... F12 Spain ... P6200

Germany ... D145 Sweden ... Se20

Greece ... D140 Switzerland ... Si400

Luxembourg ... L180 USA ... \$3.00

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS

For 13 weeks: Europe £110.75; Zone 1 (ie. East, America, Africa and India) £134.00; Zone 2 (ie. East and Australasia) £148.70. To order, please send cheques payable to *Johnson International Media Services Ltd* to 43 Macmillan, London E14 9PP, or telephone 0171 539 2288. Credit card customers:

BAKERS LISTS

Back issues of the *Independent* are available from *Hertie Newspapers*, telephone 0898 402455.

Home manager jailed for attacks on boys

Government and council officials are to study the case of a former children's home manager jailed yesterday for 15 years for a catalogue of abuse against boys.

Peter Harley, 50, of Cardiff, had admitted at a previous hearing 17 indecency charges involving boys aged six to sixteen, over five years from 1977-1982.

At the High Court in Glasgow the judge, Lord Weir, said the case raised the questions of how such a man came to be in charge of a children's home - and why the children were unable to get help over the years of abuse. Those running homes should examine "very carefully indeed" the selection of those in responsible positions, and to ensure victims could get speedy outside help, he said.

The case centred on the Merkland home in Moffat, Dumfriesshire, where Harley was the officer in charge. The home closed down in the Eighties and the council responsible for it has been replaced by Dumfries and Galloway.

The Scottish Office said last night that it would study Lord Weir's remarks, but added: "A lot of change has occurred since this case. A number of improvements have taken place for selection of staff, and also for allowing children to make their views known."

Dumfries and Galloway council said it "deeply regretted" the events which gave rise to the case,

Martini advert stirs fresh trouble

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

The makers of the "cosmetic surgery" advertisement for Martini have run into another row over the controversial campaign.

Last month the television advertisements, featuring people who had cosmetic surgery to be attractive enough to "drink the beautiful drink", were attacked by a plastic surgeon as offensive to disfigured children.

Now the drinks maker faces a claim that one of the advertisements was copied from *Face Facts*, an award-winning short film shown three times on Channel 4 in the last three years.

The allegation comes from Linda Hughes, 31, a lecturer at Barnet College, north London, who made *Face Facts* in the form of a spoof advertisement for "Beauty Inc", a fictitious cosmetics company.

The film, which won a Gold Plaque at the Chicago International Film Festival, features an unattractive man selling the message that you can be happy only if you are cosmetically transformed.

Like one Martini advertisement, her film shows a patient about to undergo surgery, then covered in bandages but fully dressed.

It concludes with the triumphant slogan: "Together we can make the whole world beautiful." Martini's slogan was: "With Martini, we can make Britain a more beautiful place."

Ms Hughes said from her London home yesterday: "If the similarity was coincidental, there were quite a lot of coincidences - the subject matter, the smug tone of the fascistic narrator and the final line."

Observation tower offers a global perspective

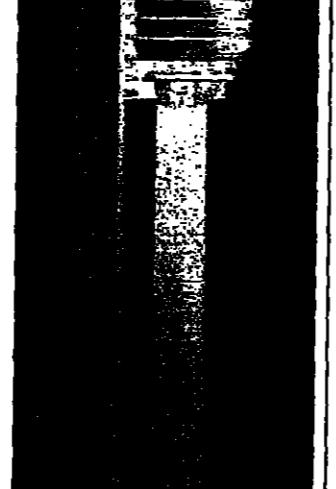
LOUISE JURY

The public could be given the opportunity to get a glimpse of deserts, savannah or rainforests several thousand miles away without having to travel further than London.

Under a scheme conceived by Peter Head, a British engineer - one of several Millennium projects to be unveiled this week - members of the public could walk into a specially devised centre in the capital to link up via satellite with other parts of the world.

A consortium of businesses is behind the 192m plan for a communications and observatory tower, called Globorama, which would be built next to the agreed site of the Millennium exhibition in Greenwich, south-east London.

The 200m high tower, which is expected to attract 2.4 million visitors by 2000, would give panoramic views of London. But, more significantly, through satellite technology, it would provide viewing platforms offering the chance to interact with major cities and natural environments "live" across the



The 232m Globorama, which would be built in Greenwich

Two hundred security guards and £100m couldn't stop a mallard doing nature's work



Safety zone: The mallard's nest (above) containing 11 eggs (below) cordoned off on the site of the Newbury bypass

Photograph: John Vos

The bulldozers line the horizon, the contractors are preparing for a hard day's graft, writes Louise Jury.

And in the middle of the path of the Newbury bypass in Berkshire, a mallard is sitting upon her 11 new eggs.

The human protesters have been forced to depart after a three-month battle, leaving the Thames Valley police to complain of the £1.6m cost of the eviction programme.

The mallard pictured above has been made safe, cordoned off with orange tape, while she tends her nest.

"It will be good if they keep on getting delays because they find wildlife there," the Friends of the Earth spokesman said.

More than 200 security

guards at a time have been employed to guard the site of the £101m bypass.

Work began at the beginning of January on the first stage, which involved clearing the site and preparing it for construction.

Last week, Charles Pollard, Chief Constable of Thames Valley, criticised a hard-core of protesters for forcing up the bill for handling the dispute by their actions.

He appealed to ordinary middle-class protesters to dissociate themselves from the allegedly violent actions of what he described as more militant campaigners.

Letters, page 16



Unilever spurns industrial fishing

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

In a major victory for conservationists, one of the world's largest multinationals is to boycott the industrial fishing which is putting the North Sea ecosystem in jeopardy.

Unilever yesterday announced that within a year it would stop using all oils derived from industrial fishing in European waters. This fishery catches more than 1 million tonnes of small fish at the base of the food chain each year and is unregulated by the European Union's Common Fisheries Policy.

The Anglo-Dutch conglomerate, which owns the Bird's Eye

brand, said it now accepted this catch of sprat, whiting, pout and sandeels was unsustainable and destructive. Unilever uses 100,000 tonnes of fish oil a year, a quarter of the total made from this catch in European waters, for products as diverse as cosmetics, cakes and biscuits and hair conditioner.

These small fish are an important food source for sea birds, seals and porpoises, and also for larger fish species which are heavily preyed on by Europe's fishing fleets.

Scientists agree that cod and haddock have been overfished for years in the North Sea, and

there is a risk of the stocks collapsing. Denmark, Norway and Iceland account for the great majority of industrial fishing off Europe, with Britain trailing in fourth place.

Unilever's announcement came as European Union fisheries ministers met in Brussels yesterday to discuss fish quotas.

Britain's fisheries minister, Tony Baldry, also launched a campaign to return Britain's fishing waters to the United Kingdom fleet.

He warned that the Common Fisheries Policy could regain credibility only if it clamped down on "quota-hoppers" who plunder another nation's EU

fish catch allocation - with the blessing of Brussels. The move follows the Government's legal defeat at the hands of the Spanish trawler fleet. The European Court of Justice has ruled that one country cannot stop trawlers from another member state sharing its quota.

Now claims worth about £30m are in the pipeline from Spanish boat owners who were excluded from UK waters after registering in British ports to qualify for British fish quotas.

Mr Baldry said that the system must change, adding: "Allocations of national quotas should be for the benefit of fishing communities in the member

states concerned - not for fishermen from another country."

But he ruled out any British pull-out from the Common Fisheries Policy as demanded by some ministers and trawlermen in the wake of the courtroom defeat. "Withdrawal from the CFP is a non-starter but it is crucial that there are reforms to the way it works. Policy-makers must listen more carefully to what fishermen themselves are saying," he said.

He also unveiled plans for setting up regional committees to consider the management of EU fisheries. They would cover areas like the Baltic, North Sea and English Channel.

The national figures are as yet incomplete, although they are thought to be proportionally correct. But some consultants believe the true figure is much higher, due to the lack of a nationwide scheme of registration.

One doctor said he had walked round a ward and spoken to three patients who had suffered spinal injuries from rugby, before being told that none were registered as such.

"There is a problem that not all spinal injuries go to spinal injury units," said Dr Savage. Patients then became "invisible".

Don Hall, sports injuries administrator for the Rugby Football Union, said it took its responsibility to players very seriously. The RFU, although making moves to increase safety, has repeatedly stressed that it is less dangerous than other "dangerous" sports.

But according to Jon Nicholl, acting director of the Medical Care Research Unit at the University of Sheffield, while dangerous sports such as rock-climbing were highest of all, the relatively tiny numbers of people who took part made them statistically insignificant.

But he added that as in Ben Smardon's case, it was the way the game was played that counted.

"If it's played in a very tough and competitive way then the risks are greatly increased."

'Mail' buys 20% of ITN in forced sale

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

The *Mail* has bought a 20 per cent stake in ITN, maker of *ITV's News At Ten*, it was announced yesterday.

In a joint statement, Granada and Carlton Communications said they had each sold a 10 per cent holding in the company to the Daily Mail and General Trust (DMGT) for a combined total of £20.4m. The move was forced upon them by

the 1990 Broadcasting Act, which limited to 20 per cent individual shareholdings in the news provider which services ITV, Channel 4 and the soon-to-be-launched Channel 5.

The ITN companies said they were disappointed at having to sell their investments but were "delighted to be selling their shares to another professional news organisation".

ITN will now be jointly owned by Carlton (20 per cent), Granada (20 per cent), DMGT (20 per cent), Reuter (18 per cent), Anglia TV and Scottish TV (5 per cent each). The remaining 12 per cent will be owned by a Carlton/Granada joint venture company, set up to hold their excess shares.

The reduction of Carlton and Granada's ITN stakes has been a long-running saga. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

the second December deadline loomed, Carlton and Granada

proposed to the Independent Television Commission that they each put their excess 16 per cent of ITN shares into a deadlocked joint venture company.

In December this took place, with neither company able to vote on the shares, thus avoiding the need to sell them cheap to meet the deadline. The deadline for their sale was originally 31 December 1994, but was later extended by 12 months. As

FREE CHILD

HEALTHCARE.

DESIGNED WITH
YOUR WALLET
IN MIND.



P
PPP healthcare™

Buying healthcare isn't just about protecting yourself. It's also about protecting those you love. Which is why, when you become a member, we'll give you 12 months' free healthcare for all your children. And, as well as getting immediate access to treatment and your own personal adviser, you'll also be able to call the Health Information Line, which can answer health or childcare questions at any hour of the day (or night). Call PPP healthcare on 0800 33 55 55 and protect the people closest to your heart.

Offer applies to new Comprehensive, Extensive and Key Plan members with children under 21 who are unmarried and living at home. Offer ends 10th May 1996.

See inside

Class conflict: Politicians condemn action over pupil of 13 as scheme to raise standards fails

Teachers under fire for strike over 'violent' boy

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

Teachers who have voted to go on strike in a dispute over a disruptive 13-year-old boy were criticised by politicians from both main parties yesterday.

Appeals for staff at Glaistead School in Nottingham, to remain at their positions came from Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, and a spokesman for the Labour Party.

Twenty of the school's 38 teachers will go on all-out strike from Friday if agreement cannot be reached at a meeting today between Nottinghamshire County Council, the school's head teacher and the boy's family. The rest of the staff may also decide to refuse to teach the boy.

Richard Wilding was permanently excluded from the school in February after allegedly being involved in 30 incidents of violence and disruption since last September.

The decision was supported by the county council but was overturned by an independent appeals panel.

Staff at the school objected to his return to school, saying he had both learning difficulties and emotional problems and that he should be in a special unit. He is now being taught separately from other pupils by a supply teacher.

Yesterday, Mrs Shephard



Richard Wilding: Given lessons on his own

"What is Labour-controlled Nottinghamshire doing about this matter? It does seem clear that the right place for this child has not yet been found," she said. "It is the duty of the LEA to find appropriate education for that child."

It was never right for teachers to strike and to harm children's education, she added.

Labour's deputy leader, John Prescott, agreed with Mrs Shephard

£50m on appraisal 'but it is a failure'

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

More than £50m spent on teacher appraisal has failed to raise standards in schools, according to an inspectors' report published yesterday. Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, has called for a closer link between teacher performance and pay.

The inspectors' report, based on visits to more than 300 schools, says that only four of those linked with pay appraisal. It points out that only 20 per cent of schools is there any sign that appraisal, introduced five years ago by the Government, improves teaching.

Mr Woodhead's Office for Standards in Education is reviewing teacher appraisal with the Teacher Training Agency and their recommendations will be sent to Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education.

At present, government guidance says that there should be no automatic link between appraisal and promotion and pay but that heads and governors may legitimately take it into account. Under existing rules agreed by teacher unions, appraisal reports cannot be used to sack a teacher. Mr Woodhead believes both principles should be re-examined.

The report argues that appraisal needs to focus more sharply on raising standards and should be less secretive. One teacher described in the report refused to let an appraisal

should he get a bonus?

Chris Woodhead (salary £82,000), Chief Inspector of Schools, and enthusiast for performance-related pay, will be appraised on Friday by Michael Bichard, permanent secretary at the Department for Education and Employment. Should he get a bonus?

Sir Rhodes Boyson, former education minister: "He's excellent. Whether you agree with him or not ... he is good news. I would definitely give him an alpha."

Professor Ted Wragg, of Exeter University's department of education: "His bonus should be minus £50,000 in view of the mayhem he has caused in education and the lack of substance to the political slant he puts on things."

Sheila Lawlor, director of the think-tank Policy: "I'm not sure whether public servants should get bonuses. But he should be recommended to the sites. He is one of the first heads of inspection to be detached from schools ... but standing in being so impartial."

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the NASUWT: "I would like to think that public servants should get bonuses. But he should be recommended to the sites. He is one of the first heads of inspection to be detached from schools ... but standing in being so impartial."

report be used as a reason for in-service training.

Mr Woodhead said: "That is nonsensical ... The culture within education at present is not one which welcomes the notion of performance pay. The general level of pay was high.

DAILY POEM

Grandfather in Green

By George Szirtes

*My grandfather, the Budapest shoemaker
wrote plays in his spare time, and then he died.
His body became a pebble on a beach
of softness across which swept the pale green tide.*

*Pale green. I think, would suit him as tint –
under his eye, or thinly flecked across
the hooked bridge of his nose. His sour complexion
was cooking apples, a summary of loss.*

*each a pucker in the flesh. His waistcoat
was grey as clouds, a pale green handkerchief
blossoming from the pocket. Even his tongue
would sit in his mouth, soft and green as a leaf.*

*And so he returned to nature after all,
the pale green gall within him in the shut
cavern of his stomach, and the green
smell of gas still lingering in the hut.*

George Szirtes was born in 1948 in Hungary and came to England with his family following the uprising in Budapest in 1956. He has published seven poetry books and is renowned both as a translator from Hungarian and as a poet in the English language. OUP have recently published his *Selected Poems 1976-1996*. This is distinctive and tangy verse, rich in Slavic melancholy and the burden of history.

said that the confidentiality surrounding appraisal was excessive. "If appraisal is to have the impact it should, then it must be open to a wider range of uses than at present."

Excellent and outstanding teachers should be identified and their performance should be rewarded. Those who were in difficulties should be offered support but action must be taken if they did not improve.

Mr Woodhead, who earns £82,000 a year, said he personally supported performance-related pay, and was himself due to be appraised under the Civil Service scheme on Friday.

Appraisal involves interviews and observation by senior colleagues followed by the setting of targets for action. All teachers are supposed to have been appraised by this year but the reduction of special government grants for the programme has led to some delays, the report says. Nearly half the schools reported difficulties in completing their appraisal programmes.

David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, said: "Chris Woodhead has admitted that the Government has sidelined appraisal. Support for the scheme has been dropped by ministers."

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the NASUWT: "I would like to think that public servants should get bonuses. But he should be recommended to the sites. He is one of the first heads of inspection to be detached from schools ... but standing in being so impartial."

report be used as a reason for in-service training.

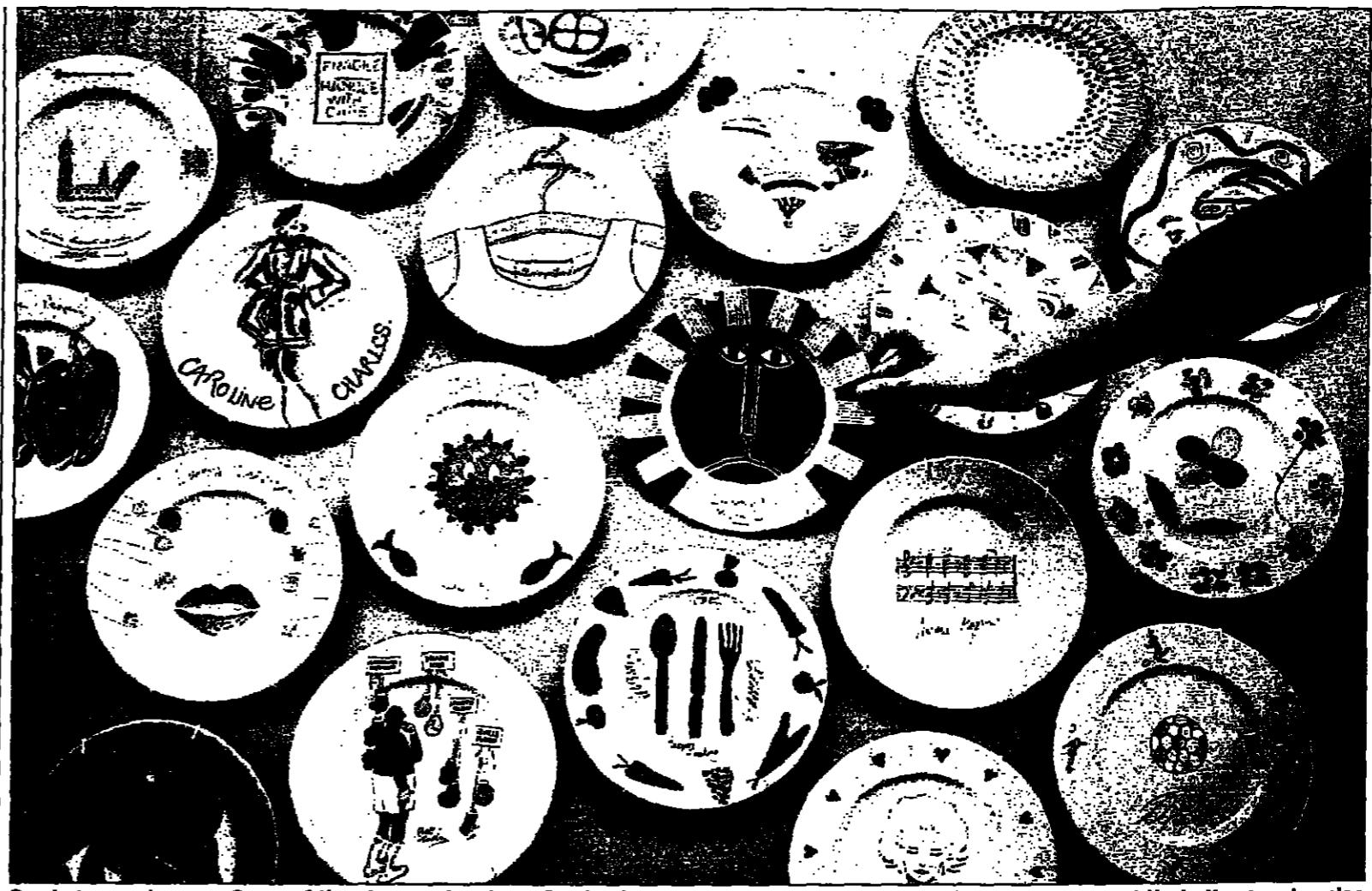
Mr Woodhead said: "That is nonsensical ... The culture within education at present is not one which welcomes the notion of performance pay. The general level of pay was high.

Gas death landlord escapes jail

A landlord was yesterday given an 18-month suspended sentence after admitting the manslaughter of a tenant who died of carbon monoxide poisoning from a faulty gas fire. Thomas Beehive, of Cottenham, Hull, admitted killing Tracey Murphy, 19, found dead in her flat in Pearson Park, Hull. In July 1994 he changed his plea on Friday after more than two days of legal argument in Sheffield Crown Court.

In 1994 the Health and Safety Executive prosecuted Beehive, who was convicted of failing to maintain the fire in Ms Murphy's room and he and his wife were each fined £1,500. In July 1994 he was prosecuted by Hull City Council and found guilty of 15 offences under the Housing Regulations Act. He received a two-year conditional discharge.

At the inquest on Ms Murphy in September 1994, a jury ruled she had been unlawfully killed.



Serving a good cause: Some of the plates painted by 78 celebrities, including Maureen Lipman, Richard Branson and Kevin Keegan, to raise money for arthritis victims. The plates will be auctioned at the Art Connoisseur's Gallery, central London, on Thursday. Photograph: Nick Turpin

Appeal told of murder case 'conjecture'

The girlfriend of a businessman

convicted of murdering her

parents yesterday said she was

certain his appeal would succeed. Cheryl Tooze, 36, spoke of her belief in Jonathan Jones's innocence outside the Court of Appeal after three judges were told that his conviction was

based on "suspicion, speculation and conjecture".

Harry Tooze, 64, and his wife, Megan, 67, were each shot once in the back of the

head with a shotgun at their farm at Llanharry, Mid Glamorgan. Miss Tooze said: "I have always said that Jonathan is innocent in the killer being covered in blood and brain tissue but there was never any forensic evidence at the Newport Crown Court trial in April last year that would link Jones with the crime. Jones, 36, of Orpington, Kent, was convicted on a 10-2 majority verdict after the prosecution claimed he paid a

surprise visit to the farm in July 1993, and had tea with the couple before shooting them.

Mr Rees said it was never proved Jones was anywhere near the farmhouse at the time of the killings and he would be bringing fresh evidence to back his claim that he was looking for an office in Orpington for Miss Tooze. His own alibi, that he spoke to lift engineers in Orpington during the day of the killings, was never disproved.

The prosecution originally claimed at the trial that Jones's motive was money, said Mr Rees. But this was not developed and was eventually dropped. In his summing-up to the jury, Mr Justice Rougier revived the financial motive and in doing so misdirected the jury, said Mr Rees.

The appeal, being heard by Lord Justice Rose, Mr Justice Dyson and Mr Justice Gage, was adjourned to today.

BREITLING
1884

Century-old mechanical systems refined still further, made to perform even better, more reliably. Packing yet more performance into already impressively multifunction electronic instruments. Giving impressively sleek cases an extra touch of silken smoothness, a highly legible dial a bit more crispness... Never still, never content, BREITLING relentlessly continues to improve its range of professional chronographs with the same dedication as the aeronautics industry upgrades its own products.

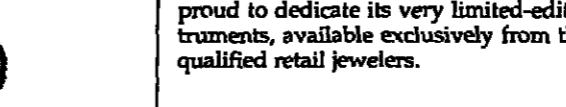


NAVITIMER SPATIOGRAPH

BREITLING has radically improved the legibility of its NAVITIMER selfwinding chronograph. Its new SPATIOGRAPH features for instance a minute totalizer with a mechanical digital display system that provides direct short-time readouts to up to ten minutes. Short-time measurements can total up to three hours. With circular slide rule for multiplications, divisions and unit conversions.



In 1996, the BREITLING ACADEMY will be providing highly advanced flight training to some of the world's most promising young aerobatics pilots. World champion and BREITLING trophyholder Xavier de Lapparent will supervise training sessions for them as they put the BREITLING ACADEMY's Sukhoi 31, Cap 232 and Extra 300 aircraft through their paces.



THE RED ARROWS
Blue Angels
SCOTT CARPENTER

The U.S. Navy's Top Gun air-combat school, the Blue Angels, the R.A.F.'s Red Arrows, the Patrouille de France, astronaut Scott Carpenter – all aeronautics legends to whom BREITLING is proud to dedicate its very limited-edition instruments, available exclusively from the most qualified retail jewelers.

This newest version of the AEROSPACE multi-function electronic chronograph provides an audible indication of the hours and minutes simply by pressing on the crown.

Over a century's expertise with mechanical chronographs is obviously no bar to topflight contemporary design. Devotees of fine workmanship are sure to appreciate sophisticated luxury styling as warmly as they value the technical excellence which short-time measurements demand.

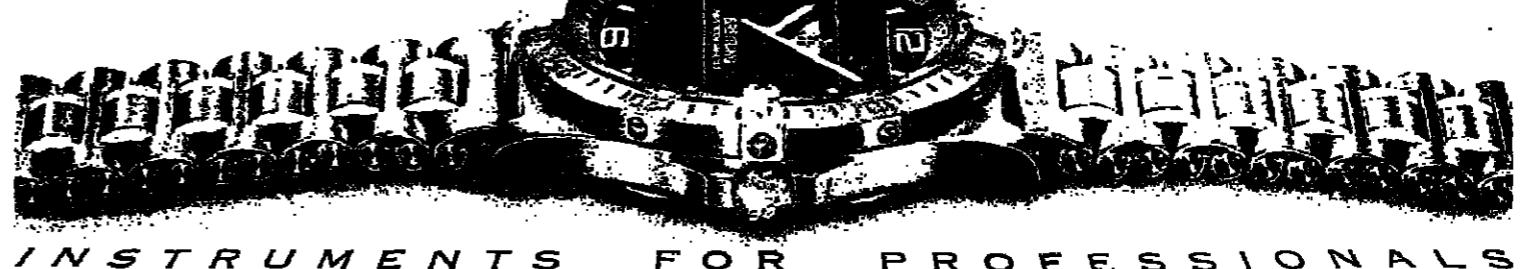


CROSSWIND

Along with its exceptionally robust size, BREITLING's new CROSSWIND mechanical chronograph features a markedly more classic design. The stylish "upmarket" layout of its dial confirms the total refinement of an impeccably engineered construction.



At the end of this year, when very high-altitude winds will have stabilized, the BREITLING ORBITER will head for the skies. Crewed by Bertrand Piccard and Wim Verstraeten, this specially designed balloon will rise into the stratosphere to attempt the first non-stop, round-the-world flight – the last of the great aeronautics adventures, crowning 213 years of dreams and achievements by the world's lighter-than-air pioneers.



INSTRUMENTS FOR PROFESSIONALS

You wouldn't believe what some people don't do to animals.

They don't feed them. They don't water them. They don't brush them.

They don't de-louse them. They don't de-flea them.

They don't bath them. They don't worm them.

They don't walk them. They don't take them to the vet.

They don't train them. They don't innoculate them. They don't spay them. They don't neuter them.

They don't groom them. They don't comb them. They don't clip their nails. They don't play with them.

They don't exercise them. They don't de-tangle their fur. They don't clean their paws. They don't supervise them.

They don't buy them leads. They don't buy them collars. They don't buy them baskets.

They don't buy them treats. They don't buy them food. They don't buy them feeding bowls.

They don't reward them. They don't provide them with a balanced diet. They don't control them. They don't check the state of their health.

They don't provide any bedding. They don't change their bedding.

They don't check their teeth. They don't clean their teeth. They don't pay them any attention.

They don't care for them.

They don't house-train them. They don't clip their coat.

They don't get insurance for them. They don't stroke them.

They don't clean up their urine. They don't clean up their faeces. They don't clean up their vomit.

They don't clean their ears. They don't clean their eyes. They don't buy them toys.

They don't detect injuries. They don't detect disease.

They don't treat injuries. They don't treat disease.

They don't provide any shelter for them.

They don't provide any warmth for them.

If you're not prepared to do all of the above, please don't do one more thing: don't give a home to a pet. Neglect is cruelty.



THE AIMS OF THE RSPCA ARE TO PREVENT CRUELTY AND PROMOTE KINDNESS TO ANIMALS.

100% 150

Don't
at
le
ls.

Car was 'lethal weapon' for schizophrenic

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

Clarification over the rights and duties of doctors to report seriously mentally ill patients to the driving licence authority is to be sought after a paranoid schizophrenic killed a young mother in a car in a London car park.

An inquiry published yesterday into the case of Nilesh Gadher, 37, a paranoid schizophrenic with a history of violence and of failing to take his medication, lists a catalogue of errors in his care. They culminated because of fears over his mental health.

His condition deteriorated. He left a rehabilitation work project, he was not taking his medication and he set out to work as a mini-cab driver. But despite a warning six months before from his father and brother that he could kill himself or someone else, and despite complaints from neighbours over his behaviour and evident deterioration, a social worker decided Gadher did not meet the criteria for compulsory treatment.

But the inquiry said it was also concerned that Gadher was able to buy and drive a car, possibly with fare-paying passengers in it, while in his psychotic state. "The fact of the matter is that a car is every bit as lethal a weapon in the wrong hands at the wrong time as a firearm," the inquiry chaired by Judge Main said.

A patient admitted to hospital with a psychosis has a duty to inform the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, which can revoke the licence, and should be advised by doctors not to drive. But there is nothing in law to prevent someone driving against advice the inquiry said, although it "may be appropriate" for the doctor to tell the DVLA.

Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow Health Authority, which with Ealing Council commissioned the report, said however there were issues over patient confidentiality in doctors reporting patients. "We will be asking the departments of health and transport to clarify the ethics and law in this area and to change to the law if necessary," a spokesman said.

The DVLA said there was no legal requirement on doctors to tell them if a patient was considered too ill to drive, although some doctors did in fact contact the agency. A spokeswoman said there was a reluctance to in-

'Road-rage' victim rejects publicity

A man beaten over the head with a metal bar because he did not say thank you to a driver is withholding his identity because he did not want to frighten his three young children.

The 31-year-old man, from Norris Green, Liverpool, faces further surgery as he still cannot see in his right eye but doctors hope he will regain his sight.

The man had dropped his children at a relative's home in Liverpool and was crossing a road at about 6pm on Friday when a newish looking black Vauxhall Cavalier slowed to let him cross. Its driver waved him on but when he was almost across he felt a heavy blow to his back.

He turned to see the driver, a 6ft tall skinhead in his 20s, attacking him with a 3ft long scaffolding bar. He struck him across the right side of his head knocking him to the ground.

The driver told him: "Next

time say thanks", and got back in his car. The injured man was found staggering along the road and taken to the Royal Liverpool hospital. He suffered three fractures above his right eye socket and had bone removed.

A police spokesman said yesterday that the pedestrian could not see at present because of the injury, but medical staff are hopeful that he will get sight back in the eye.

"He does not want his name released. He said he didn't want his children to know he has been assaulted in this way because he didn't want to put fear in them," the spokesman added.

"It is a shame when people can't just cross the road to go to a chip shop without being attacked like this. Road rage is quite new and we have had no similar incidents in the area but this is particularly shocking when you consider that it was unprovoked."

Do you have about 40% too much money?

Then why spend 40% more on your international calls?

- Worldcall costs about 40% less than BT for international calls.
- Call anytime, to anywhere in the world.
- Pay for what you say, per second billing to most countries.
- Enjoy high quality digital connections from your home or business.
- Prepay just £25* and get £50 free credit.
- It's simple - just dial Worldcall first.

*This excludes VAT. Rates and card usage apply available on request.

**f10
FREE
CALL OFFER**

Offer valid until 30th April 1996. For those with account, please see page 2.

**Call now
0181 900 9990
Worldcall®**

introduce compulsion because the issue of patient confidentiality was "a very sensitive area".

The inquiry concluded that the magnitude of the tragedy was not predictable. But it was predictable that Gadher would stop taking his medication and that if he did he might become violent. It might have been prevented if he had been re-admitted hospital or prevented from driving.

At the time consultants and nurses faced excessive workloads and an inadequate range of services. More cash has been provided - but despite "strenuous efforts" the trust has been unable to appoint an additional consultant despite funds being available.



The golden age of steam lives on: Martin Prior working on a signal box in his garden in Sutton St Nicholas, Hereford and Worcester, where he designs, makes and sells life-size replicas of steam-age railway buildings and engines

Photograph: Rob Stratton

48-hour
overdraft

No stings
attached

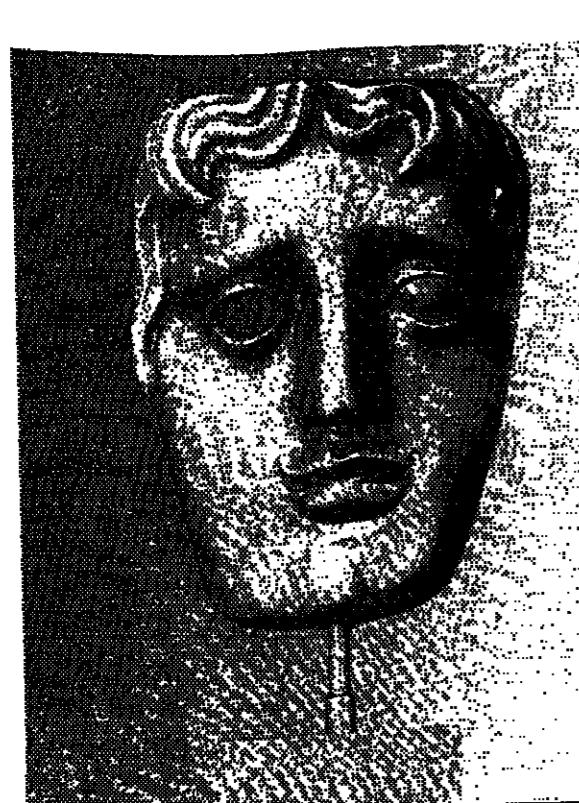
BARCLAYS

For more information, simply fill in this coupon or alternatively phone 0800 222 300, quoting ref 142.

Name _____ Address _____ Postcode _____

Telephone _____ Return to: Barclays Bank PLC, Personal Banking, FREEPOST, BS10 8PS, Bristol BS1 5WX.

AVAILABLE FOR PERSONAL CUSTOMERS ONLY AGED 18 OR OVER (IN JERSEY) SUBJECT TO STATUS. THE 10% FEE IS FOR A 12 MONTH OVERDRAFT. AUTHORISED OVERDRAFTS AND 12 MONTH OVERDRAFTS OVERDRAFTS ARE APPROXIMATELY 10% AND 12% PER ANNUAL QUOTATION. CALL 0800 322 322. BARCLAYS BANK PLC REGISTERED IN ENGLAND AND NO. 1107777. © 1996 BARCLAYS BANK PLC.



BAFTA Best News Coverage 1986.



BAFTA Best News Coverage 1987.



BAFTA Best News Coverage 1988.



BAFTA Best News Coverage 1990.



BAFTA Best News Coverage 1991.



BAFTA Best News Coverage 1992.



BAFTA Best News Coverage 1993.



BAFTA Best News Coverage 1994.

United Na
* Brita
sup
ban
and-r

It's the only time you could ever accuse us of being predictable.

On Sunday, ITN won the BAFTA award for News Coverage in 1995.

(Two out of the four nominations were for ITN reports: News at Ten and Channel 4 News).

The winning coverage in question was Channel 4 News' reports on war crimes in former Yugoslavia.



BAFTA Best News Coverage 1995.

The British Academy Award is based on a design by Mitzi Canlife.

It involved in-depth investigative journalism, reporting on the Serb massacres in Srebrenica, and a harrowing interview with a survivor.

This is the ninth time in ten years that we've won the award itself.

So in fact, we are predictable.

But only because we work very hard at it.

ITN

ITN

United Nations weapons review: Geneva conference to be told of change in policy

Britain to support ban on land-mines

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

Britain is today expected to announce a change in its policy on anti-personnel land-mines, and tell the United Nations Weapons Convention Review Conference which opened in Geneva yesterday that it will support a world-wide ban on their manufacture, export and use.

The move follows indications that senior members of the United States military favour a total ban, and studies by the Red Cross and other independent organisations which cast doubt on the military effectiveness of anti-personnel mines.

The first session of the review conference in September 1995 banned the use and transfer of laser weapons specifically designed to blind people - the first time that a specific new kind of weapon had been banned since 1868. It failed to reach a decision on anti-personnel mines.

An estimated 100 million anti-personnel mines are scattered across the world, and they cause an estimated 20,000 casualties a year, mostly to farmers, other civilians and children. They also kill livestock. Experts estimate the plague of anti-personnel land-mines is now hindering development and reconstruction in more than 35 countries. There are an estimated 4 million mines in Bosnia, but they have taken their heaviest toll in Cambodia. In both cases the conflicts in which they were laid are now over but their scourge remains.

Until now the British government has supported the view that anti-personnel mines remain a legitimate weapon of war. They were intended to protect the larger anti-tank mines against at-

tempts to clear them. Whereas anti-tank mines are fairly easy to detect and require a heavy weight to set them off, anti-personnel mines are often made from plastic and other undetectable materials. They are not designed to kill outright, but to inflict horrible wounds, especially to the legs and genitals, which, besides crippling the victims, overload the medical services.

However, "dual-use" mines, which can destroy vehicles and maim and kill, are increasingly available. The Red Cross is opposing the definition of anti-personnel mines as those "primarily designed" to maim or kill people, as this could render any future agreement ambiguous. It believes all mines should be detectable and that "anti-handling devices" - booby traps - should be prohibited.

Britain recently faced isolation among the more developed countries following a statement by the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili, that he was "inclined to eliminate all anti-personnel land-mines". General Norman Schwarzkopf, who commanded the victorious Allied forces in the 1991 Gulf war, also signed an open letter to President Bill Clinton supporting a total ban. Germany recently renounced anti-personnel mines as a weapon it would use in war.

British diplomatic sources yesterday stressed that the reluctance to sign up to a total ban was due to doubts about whether it would work. The countries which still export anti-personnel land-mines - China, India and Pakistan - have not signed up to any restrictions. Russia has signed a three-year moratorium on anti-personnel mines which do not destroy themselves after a given period.

Bus firm wins rail franchise

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

The sixth privatised rail franchise, the InterCity services out of St Pancras, was yesterday awarded to National Express, the bus company which has already won the right to run the Gatwick Express rail shuttle.

National Express won a 10-year deal with the promise of extra services and new trains. Although initially it will receive more than £16.5m in subsidy - £6.5m more than currently being paid to British Rail, by the end of the 10-year franchise it has committed itself to paying £10m for the right to run the services. The franchise for Midland Main Line, covers services between London St Pancras and Wellingborough, Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham, Derby and Sheffield.

While not committing itself to the existing timetable, National Express says it will "be maintaining broadly the current level of service for the first three years" and that by 1999, once new trains had been leased, there would be substantial increases in the timetable. For example, according to Roger Salmon, the franchising director, there will be "10 more services each weekday to and from Derby, 10 each weekday for Nottingham and 22 for Leicester".

Child agency given boost to its image

The Child Support Agency made "dramatic improvements" last year, the Government claimed yesterday as it launched a new offensive in the propaganda battle to turn round the agency's disastrous image, writes John Rentoul.

Publishing an end-of-year report which showed that the CSA had exceeded three of its five key performance targets, Andrew Mitchell, a junior social security minister, claimed the agency was "well on its way to providing a high-quality service for all its clients".

But Malcolm Wicks, Labour's spokesman on the CSA, said: "They are improving from such an abysmally low



Call for ban: 2,000 pairs of shoes in Sergels Square, Stockholm, representing the victims injured by land-mines every month, placed by the Swedish Red Cross on Saturday, the international day of protest against mines. Photograph: Reuter

"Wouldn't it
be nice if the
wondrous,
futuristic,

virtual

world of the
Internet was
just a little less,
well, virtual?"

Something magical is happening to our planet. It's getting smaller. Every day, more people and more information are making the Internet a place of incredible opportunity and transformation.

Suddenly, people just like you have access to potential customers, business contacts, partners and competitors in every corner of the planet.

How can you make the most of this opportunity? Well, we'd like to help.

We have all of the minds and resources of IBM focused on the emerging world of networked computing.

Over the next few months, we're going to discuss strategies and technologies to help you get from here to there. Let's start by talking about what's going on across the planet.

Electronic commerce is becoming a reality thanks to improved security and encryption technology like our innovative Cryptolopes which ensure that messages are read only by the people you want reading them.

Cybermalls are springing up everywhere, letting companies sell their wares to millions of customers on line, without costly premises.

Instead of gathering dust in a warehouse, products are made and shipped to order.

And what's more, the more enterprise data you can bring on line, the wider you can cast your net.

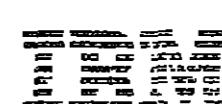
The managed IBM Global Network is helping companies connect. Enterprises are expanding to give customers and suppliers piping hot information on prices, inventory and delivery schedules. Making them more efficient and honing their competitive edge.

All thanks to one of the world's largest managed data networks with managed access from Rio to Reykjavik and 848 other cities worldwide.

By using Lotus Notes over the Internet, people in remote locations can work on the same project simultaneously, expanding their reach even further.

If you are eager to take advantage of the Internet, you don't need to be a millionaire. Or a genius. You just need to drop by www.ibm.com or call 0800 675 675 for further information highlighting how IBM can help your business thrive in a networked world.

This is just beginning. We have a lot more to share with you. Just remember: it's a small planet. And it's yours.



Solutions for a small planet

Police reject hill rescue pay plan

STEPHEN GOODWIN

Chief police officers yesterday warned an MPs' inquiry into mountain rescue services that introducing compulsory insurance could wreck a "perfectly good" system for dealing with accidents in the Scottish hills.

A proposal that climbers and hillwalkers should take out cover to pay for their rescue if they get lost, injured or worse, is one of the options being considered by the Scottish Affairs Committee.

But according to the Association of Chief Police Officers, which gave evidence to the MPs in Inverness, compulsory insurance could end the present system where the brunt of most mountain rescues is borne by volunteers, many of them climbers.

The police, who have the statutory responsibility for "missing" persons, and the mountaineers are at one in believing that arrangements which are working well in Scotland should not be tampered with.

Last year, there were 34 fatalities in the Scottish hills attributable to climbing or hill-walking accidents. This winter the toll has been comparatively light with only seven fatalities.

but none the less the call for compulsory insurance has been renewed.

Bill Walker, a Tory member of the committee, says the user should pay for rescues and not the taxpayer. Insurance would enable the victim to meet a bill which could run into thousands of pounds if a helicopter was used. RAF or Royal Navy helicopters are used in 60 per cent of rescues. Keeping an RAF Sea King airborne for an hour costs an estimated £5,000 but crews regard the operations as valuable live training.

The police told the committee that if insurance was introduced "then there is little doubt that the civilian rescue service would cease to exist as we know it". In Scotland, there are 900 volunteers grouped into 24 civilian teams plus two RAF teams. There are big question marks over the willingness of volunteers to co-operate in a "paid-for" system.

Finlay Maclellan, the deputy chief constable of Northern Region, warned the MPs that if the burden of carrying out rescues fell on the police, forces such as his own covering a mountainous region, could not cope without "vast" additional resources.

international

Mitterrand's last word on Vichy and history

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

Three and a half months after his death, France's former president, François Mitterrand, still lies unearthing his grave. With his relatives blocking publication of a book that claims he misled the French public about his career, and his widow's not always flattering memoirs still on the best-seller list, his own recollections have now appeared in two slim volumes which are distinguished by the elegance of the language and the lavishness of the author's self-justification.

He completed the books, published today, only in the final days of his life and they con-

tain his last words on the two big controversies that marked his later years: claims that he collaborated with the Vichy regime and accusations that he "misread history" by resisting the reunification of Germany.

On the reunification of Germany, Mitterrand comes out fighting and appears to have been stung by the accusation that he misread history. The first time he broached the question in public, he says, was during a visit to Moscow in July 1989. He knew that his hosts strongly disapproved of reunification – and implies that it would have been bad manners to disagree.

He charts his statements, interviews and articles between

then and the day – again in Moscow – where the Allied powers finally approved the end of Germany's division, insisting all the time that he did not oppose reunification, but merely laid down necessary conditions. "If moving towards reunification was legitimate, that still did not mean that it should come about just now," he says, insisting that it should be "peaceful and democratic". The only real disagreement with Chancellor Helmut Kohl, he claims, was over recognition of the German-Polish border along the Oder-Neisse line, but insists that they managed to preserve good relations despite this.

If I could be accused of any-

thing, Mitterrand says, "it was that I did not jump through the window of the first carriage of the train of history ... but if I was left on the platform, so were a lot of other people."

On his connections with the Vichy regime, Mitterrand is ambivalent, while making every effort to appear forthright and reasonable. He presents himself as an eternal rebel, who bucked any curb on his freedom, while appreciating a strong leader when he saw one. Hence his decision to serve the Resistance in France rather than abroad, and his growing contempt for Marshal Pétain – for "perpetually compromising".

For his decision to settle in

Vichy after escaping from Germany in 1942, and his acceptance of a job ("only on contract") with the Vichy regime, his only defence is rhetoric: "What am I reproached with? Of not having been in the resistance in 1940, when I was in prison in Germany? Of being press-ganged by Vichy to take a high-level post for pay equivalent to less than today's minimum wage? Of having breathed the air of this town for a few months – air that many others gulped down and suffered no ill effects from?"

Mitterrand has admiration, but also misgivings about General Charles de Gaulle. Only De Gaulle, he suggests, could have

united the resistance and emerged as France's liberator. But, he argues, if De Gaulle's resistance appeal from London had not been mythologised in the way it was, "De Gaulle would not have been able to obscure the internal resistance, whose role has been systematically and unjustly played down."

In one anecdote Mitterrand sums up the chancy atmosphere of the time. Returning to Paris in 1943 as "Resistance agent Morland", he was stopped by the officers looking for black-market goods. His case contained a British pistol and cyanide capsules. It was examined, and handed back: "No butter, no eggs? On your way!"



Entente cordiale: Presidents Mikhail Gorbachev (left) and François Mitterrand
Photograph: Rex Features



Communist supporters marching to the Lenin Mausoleum, in Red Square, Moscow, yesterday on the 126th anniversary of the birth of the founder of the Russian Communist state. The Communists are leading in polls for the elections on 16 June. Photograph: Michael Evstafiev/Reuters

Chernobyl forgotten as Ukraine turns nuclear

As the scene of the world's worst nuclear disaster 10 years ago, Ukraine might be expected to have renounced nuclear power, or at least to be curtailing its use. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Ukraine's nuclear industry is expanding, with the support of politicians in and out of government who defend it as a means of achieving economic independence from Russia.

Even the Chernobyl plant, where a reactor exploded and caught fire on 26 April 1986, is still operating, although the government says it will meet western concerns and close the station by 2000.

The pro-nuclear lobby points to the fact that last winter was one of the coldest and fiercest in living memory, and at times Ukrainians relied on their country's network of five stations and 15 reactors to supply half their energy needs.

Without Chernobyl and the other stations, nuclear industry officials say, schools and factories would have closed and people would have shivered in their homes.

"The last three winters have shown that Ukraine cannot survive without nuclear power. Our stations pulled the entire energy system through," said Nur Nigmatullin, the acting head of Ukraine's state nuclear energy authority.

Apart from demanding the closure of Chernobyl, whose Soviet-style graphite-core reactor is viewed as fundamentally flawed, in design, western governments have urged Ukraine to reduce its reliance on nuclear power through conservation

Tony Barber in Kiev reports on the return of an industry that gave the world its worst reactor accident

measures and increased efficiency in other energy sectors.

But Ukraine has barely emerged from a deep economic slump that coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the government says the tight budgets needed to stabilise the economy do not allow for large expenditure on modernising the nuclear sector and launching energy conversion projects.

The Group of Seven industrialised countries has offered Ukraine about \$3bn (£1.65bn) to close Chernobyl and revamp the national energy industry, but the government is holding out for at least \$4bn. Officials say the western aid would not cover the cost of replacing the cracking concrete-and-steel "sarcophagus" that was hastily

built by Soviet authorities after April 1986 to enclose the ruined Chernobyl reactor.

But money is only part of the story. Another factor behind Ukraine's new-found determination to expand the nuclear industry is the decline in popular anti-nuclear sentiment.

After Chernobyl, opposition to nuclear power turned into a powerful political force that was exploited by anti-communist nationalists seeking to create an independent Ukraine. In 1990, one year before the declaration of independence, Ukraine's parliament passed a moratorium on building nuclear power stations, including three reactors that were almost ready to go into service. In 1993, parliament lifted the moratorium, and last year a re-

actor at Zaporizhia, Europe's largest plant with six 1,000 megawatt units, came on line.

Both the government and many of its critics argue that cutting back nuclear power would risk placing Ukraine's economy at the mercy of foreign energy suppliers. In practice this means Russia, and to a lesser extent Turkmenistan, to which Ukraine owes huge debts in unpaid oil and gas bills.

The argument clearly has some substance at a time when Russia is using its influence in economic and energy matters as a way of re-integrating several former Soviet republics, notably Belarus, under its leadership. Persistent difficulties in Ukraine's relations with Russia, which boil down to the question of how far Russian leaders genuinely accept Ukrainian independence, make the authorities in Kiev wary of taking any measures in the nuclear sector that could increase dependence on Russia.

As a result, the Ukrainian nuclear industry is looking forward to the completion of two new reactors – one at a plant in Rivne, and one at Khrushchev. Both were about 85 per cent finished by the start of this year, and there are two more reactors at Khrushchev which are already 45 per cent complete.

Last July, Ukraine's nuclear authorities even declared that Chernobyl was the safest of its five plants, and the Chernobyl director, Serhi Parashin, proposed that it should continue to operate until 2007. If that seems unlikely, the further development of Ukraine's nuclear industry as a whole does not.

Forest fires sweep Mongolia

Ulan Bator (Reuters) – Forest fires continued to rage out of control in north-eastern Mongolia yesterday, leaving burnt-out nomadic tent villages and charred cattle carcasses.

"The situation is very serious," said General Damdinsuren, deputy chief of the Mongolian State Emergency Commission, adding that the fire damage was "huge".

Since the fires roared onto

the Mongolian Steppe on 9 April, some 3,000 firefighters, helped by nomads, have been working around the clock to bring the flames under control.

Shortages of food, exhaustion and poor equipment hampered firefighting efforts. Mr Damdinsuren said, adding that nomads in the remote Hentii mountains had fought the fire for days with just coats and tree branches.

CAR INSURANCE
Looking for the
lowest
premium?
FREE
Windsor
Ball Pen
with every quote
CALL DIAL DIRECT FREE
0500 333 600
TO CLAIM YOUR PEN QUOTE REF 7445



Power play: Greenpeace protesters in Kiev remember lost villages around Chernobyl. Photograph: Efrem Lukatsky

Lacklustre Dole fuels Republican poll jitters

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

A month after Bob Dole clinched the Republican nomination in record time, dismal poll ratings and an uncharacteristically clumsy performance as Senate majority leader are kindling party fears that he may lead it to a massive defeat in November which could even cost it control of Congress.

The second half of April was when Mr Dole was supposed to start the march to the White House, reinvigorated after the Easter recess and back in his natural habitat on Capitol Hill. Instead he has seen President Clinton widen his lead to 15 points or more and, far from using his Senate perch to define his policies, he has merely managed to expose Republican divisions on a host of major issues in the autumn campaign.

Even before the primaries, Mr Dole had decided he would be better served staying on as majority leader, rather than step aside to concentrate on the campaign. Better free air-time on the Senate floor, where he controlled the legislative agenda, he reasoned, than paid air time – especially when he was virtually out of money until the summer conventions.

Thus far, alas, the gamble has backfired miserably. On health care, Mr Dole last week ma-

neuvred himself into seeming to be trying to torpedo a modest but politically popular Bill that would expand insurance coverage for people who changed jobs or who suffered from pre-existing medical conditions. That measure now seems likely to go through, but only thanks to the defection of five Senate Republicans.

Much the same happened with a Bill to increase the min-

imum wage, pressed by Democrats to underline their concern for the worst-off. But Mr Dole resisted, only to be, in his words, "blindsided" by a group of House Republicans who support the proposed rise from \$4.25 (£2.81) to \$5.15 (£3.41) an hour. Now the increase will almost certainly be voted upon, and approved – probably this week.

Mr Dole's basic problem, as he seeks metamorphosis from primary candidate to White House nominee, is his inability to follow the celebrated maxim of Richard Nixon: that a Republican candidate should play to the right during the primaries, where voters are more conservative, but once the nomination is secure, head back to the centre where elections are won and lost.

It is not his fault that he is easily identified with the deeply unpopular Speaker, Newt Gingrich, and the scarcely less unfriendly Republican Congress – or that the populist Pat Buchanan could still make trouble at the San Diego convention. But despite a first-hand view of how George Bush suffered from identification with the far-right at the Houston convention of 1992, Mr Dole still courts social and Christian conservatives, as in a blistering attack last week on Mr Clinton for destroying America's moral fabric.

Barely six months before the vote, many already feel that only two developments (best of all, both together) can give the listless Dole campaign real hope. One is nomination of retired General Colin Powell as his running mate, the other is Gen Powell's continues to say no, while despite every effort of Mr Dole's allies on the Senate Banking Committee and of special prosecutor Kenneth Starr in Little Rock, the imagined misdeeds of the then Governor Clinton remain unproven.



Startling OFFERS Honest ADVICE

LINE RENTAL £8.99
Plus FREE connection and calls from 20p per minute

MOBILE PHONES FROM AS LITTLE AS £1

6 MONTHS FREE LINE RENTAL

FREE CALLS FOREVER!

BARNES 01226 770880
BASILDON 01268 522288
BASILDON Eastgate 01268 288888
BASINGSTOKE 01256 330333
BRIGHTON 01273 606242
BURY ST EDMUNDS 01284 763000
CAMBRIDGE 01223 462482
CANTERBURY 01227 780111
CHELMSFORD 01245 353905
CHICHESTER 01243 771117
COLCHESTER 01206 369800
EASTBOURNE 01323 720200
FAREHAM 01329 825511
FOLKESTONE 01303 259000
GLOUCESTER 01452 502555
GRAYS 01375 396693
GREAT YARMOUTH 01493 331113
GUILDFORD 01429 300888
HARLEPOOL 01429 234566
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD 01442 233003
HORSHAM 01403 260410
IPSWICH 01473 215915
LUTON 01582 487788
MAIDSTOKE 01622 201622
NORTHAMPTON 01604 259444
ORPINGTON 01689 876060
PETERBOROUGH 01733 555773
RAVENHILL 01708 524406

REDDITCH 01527 584588
ROMFORD 01708 753348
SOUTHAMPTON 01703 217433
ST ALBANS 01727 854444
STEVENAGE 01438 751175
STROOD 01634 296499
WESTCLIFF ON SEA 01702 333766

LONDON BRANCHES
CHISWICK 0181 747 1444
DOCKLANDS 0171 252 0787
ENFIELD 0181 532 5333
FENCHURCH STREET 0171 709 9000
SOUTH WOODFORD 0181 532 9663
STRAND 0171 240 0222

FOR SOUND ADVICE AND GREAT OFFERS, WHY GO ANYWHERE ELSE?

Not all offers available together. Offers subject to status and are available on selected models and joint contracts. Offers dependent on signing a new airline agreement through MPC with payment by Direct Debit. Please quote for maximum 12 month term. £20.99 per month for 12 months. £10.99 per month for 24 months. £5.99 per month for 36 months. £3.99 per month for 48 months. £2.99 per month for 60 months. £1.99 per month for 72 months. £1.49 per month for 84 months. £1.09 per month for 96 months. £0.79 per month for 108 months. £0.59 per month for 120 months. £0.49 per month for 132 months. £0.39 per month for 144 months. £0.31 per month for 168 months. £0.24 per month for 180 months. £0.21 per month for 192 months. £0.19 per month for 204 months. £0.17 per month for 216 months. £0.15 per month for 228 months. £0.13 per month for 240 months. £0.11 per month for 252 months. £0.10 per month for 264 months. £0.09 per month for 276 months. £0.08 per month for 288 months. £0.07 per month for 300 months. £0.06 per month for 312 months. £0.05 per month for 324 months. £0.04 per month for 336 months. £0.03 per month for 348 months. £0.02 per month for 360 months. £0.01 per month for 372 months. £0.005 per month for 384 months. £0.0025 per month for 396 months. £0.00125 per month for 408 months. £0.000625 per month for 420 months. £0.0003125 per month for 432 months. £0.00015625 per month for 444 months. £0.000078125 per month for 456 months. £0.0000390625 per month for 468 months. £0.00001953125 per month for 480 months. £0.000009765625 per month for 492 months. £0.0000048828125 per month for 504 months. £0.00000244140625 per month for 516 months. £0.000001220703125 per month for 528 months. £0.0000006103515625 per month for 540 months. £0.00000030517578125 per month for 552 months. £0.000000152587890625 per month for 564 months. £0.0000000762939453125 per month for 576 months. £0.00000003814697265625 per month for 588 months. £0.000000019073486328125 per month for 600 months. £0.0000000095367431640625 per month for 612 months. £0.00000000476837158203125 per month for 624 months. £0.000000002384185791015625 per month for 636 months. £0.0000000012020928950078125 per month for 648 months. £0.00000000060104644750390625 per month for 660 months. £0.000000000300523223751953125 per month for 672 months. £0.0000000001502616118759765625 per month for 684 months. £0.00000000007513080593798828125 per month for 696 months. £0.000000000037565402968994140625 per month for 708 months. £0.0000000000187827014844770703125 per month for 720 months. £0.0000000000093913507422385359375 per month for 732 months. £0.0000000000046956753711192679688 per month for 744 months. £0.0000000000023478376855596339844 per month for 756 months. £0.0000000000011739188427798169922 per month for 768 months. £0.0000000000005869594213899084961 per month for 780 months. £0.0000000000002934797106949542481 per month for 792 months. £0.0000000000001467398553474771241 per month for 804 months. £0.

obituaries/gazette

Molly Keane

Molly Keane had an unusual place in contemporary literature, in writing very good plays and novels under two entirely separate identities at different times of her life.

She was a leading playwright in the 1930s whose work was directed by John Gielgud and produced by Binkie Beaumont, and she was an interesting novelist. But all the time she wrote under the pseudonym of "M.J. Farrell" and few outside her close circle knew who she really was. Their personal tragedy intervened, she stopped writing and it was many years until, in 1981, the novel *Good Behaviour* was published under her own name, caused a sensation and just missed the Booker Prize. She became a celebrity both in Britain and in her home-country, Ireland. Despite being well over 80 she continued to write, and *Loving and Living* and *Time after Time*, both published later in the decade, are among her best work.

She was born Mary Skrine, in 1904, into a family whose roots lay in the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland, but she spent a good deal of her early childhood in Bath, in the big house at Claverton now occupied by the American Museum, a use she deplored, promoting a cult site here that had little time for her. Her mother wrote under the name Moira O'Neill, and was a significant minor poet, her father a colonial governor of Mauritius. Her childhood was lonely and deeply unhappy; domineering and incompetent mothers and weedy fathers are frequent characters in her books. In adolescence and young adulthood she lived mostly in Ireland, and her time there was marked by the endless political turmoil following the 1916 Easter Rising and the Black and Tan war.

But her family area of East

Cork and Waterford was perhaps less dramatically affected by these events than some parts of the country, and after 1922 the traditional life of what were universally known as the Horse Protestants resumed, even if many participants were impoverished and had to resort to second-hand riding boots. It was in the comedy of these years, where a good deal of "nipping" between the bedrooms of the different sexes took place, that she found the raw material for her first books.

The importance of horses in this world cannot be overstated. The same limited group of upper-class people met each other all over Ireland at the same events every year, sitting on the backs of these animals. But it was an expensive way to spend your time, even then, and the only reason Molly really started writing was to finance her obsessive hunting. Mills and Boon took her first effort, *Young Envy*, and she was, as she always put it, over the first fence. When funds were low she locked herself away in her parents' home, wrote a novel and with the few hundred pounds gained spent the next few months staying at friends' houses, hunting almost every day. It was a simple, straightforward hedonistic world; dancing was to the wind-up gramophone. White Ladies were drunk before dinner, hardly anyone opened a book.

To be known as a writer would have been social death, so she used the name M.J. Farrell, immortalising a Lismore pub. During this time her other main concern was an intense, five-year-long secret affair with the man who was, in 1938, to become her husband, Bobby Keane. He was dashing and, needless to say, rode beautifully, but he was also intelligent and sensitive and

encouraged her to take her writing more seriously.

A chance meeting at a Tipperary house-party with John Perry, one of the sons of the house but also a working actor in London, led to her first efforts to write plays. They are, in general style, clones of standard West End comedies of the time, but with much better drawn characters and an accurate, pointed wit in the dialogue. The most successful, *Spring Meeting*, produced in 1938, was one of the Shaftesbury Avenue hits of the year, and deserves revival.

But she ran into trouble with *Ducks and Drakes* in 1941, a play that satirised the English war effort at a time when the desperation of the military situation led few in the audiences to appreciate her comedy. Although she tried again with *Guardian Angel* in 1944 and *Treasure Hunt* in 1949, she never again had the success of the earlier work. But she loved the theatre, not least because the close relationship she enjoyed with Gielgud and Beaumont led her to attend rehearsals and emerge at least temporarily, and privately, from the anonymity that her social world had imposed on her.

The death in 1946 of her husband, at the early age of 37, was a blow. Their marriage had been a great source of strength to her. She stopped writing and devoted herself to bringing up their daughters. In any case, the world of the hunt and the accompanying coherence of the Anglo-Irish social life had begun to decline, even in strongholds like West Waterford. The crisis in the economy after 1945 had led to a marked decline in the various sources of income from the Empire on which so many of those families depended to augment the meagre returns from their farms. Some of the families from which

Molly Keane drew her ideas simply sold up and left.

The reasons for the renewal of her creativity that led to the Eighties books are not clear; perhaps she was just bored. She was too old to ride any more and, although she took an active part in community life at Ardmore, she may have felt the need to make a final record of a world as remote from contemporary Ireland as science fiction. With *Good Behaviour* in 1981, she burst on a largely unsuspecting world as a charming, wickedly witty old lady, very much Molly Keane, an independent Irishwoman and proud of it.

Keane was very unlucky not to win the Booker Prize with *Good Behaviour* in many years she would have done so easily but it went to Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. She was surprised herself, thinking she was seen by the London literati as a right-wing old fossil, compared to the politically correct Rushdie. In fact, her last book did anything but celebrate the aristocratic milieu uncritically. The increasingly black element in the comedy encloses a vision of the world of the Anglo-Irish privileged as one of loneliness, futility and often despair. It may have appeared a terribly jolly life, but it was inwardly corrupt and doomed. Yet it had its own unique quality, and she chronicled its final phase better than anyone else has, better even than her great friend Elizabeth Bowen.

Although having virtually no formal education at all, of any kind, Molly Keane was extraordinary well-informed on a huge range of topics. She was a brilliant conversationalist. She read widely, but Jane Austen was the only mentor she acknowledged, and whose works she reread. Her little house on top of the cliff at Ardmore was her home for many years, with a fine collection of modern Irish paintings, those of Nora McGuinness in particular. Keane's social behaviour was formal, with children in particular being treated kindly but expected to keep to their allotted place. Drinks were generous: she always said one of the few reasons to cut somebody was if they started putting optics on the spirits. An aggressive little dog followed her around the place. Like many Anglo-Irish, she appeared profoundly upper-class English on the surface, with a deeply attractive pointed face, blue eyes of exceptional clarity and the voice of a woman in her youth. But as soon as she started to speak the illusion broke. Although a warm friend, she was never slow to point out the faults of others.

To make her books so good, she needed the dose of acid in the bloodstream as well as more conventional substances, but it did lead to a sense of foreboding and mild anxiety in the Blackwater valley sitting-rooms after *Good Behaviour* came out. It was fairly clear to a lot of people who the coddish Aroon in that book was modelled on. Who would be next? Unfortunately, no one will have that flattering minor worry any more.

James Pettifer

Mary Nesta Skrine ("M.J. Farrell"), playwright and novelist; born Co Kildare 20 July 1904; married 1938 Robert Keane (died 1946; two daughters); died Ardmore, Co Waterford 22 April 1996.



Keane: a charming, wickedly witty old lady, an independent Irishwoman and proud of it



Empty fame: A.A. Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh and Christopher in 1926

Photograph: Howard Coster

The Right Rev Kevin Rafferty

Kevin Rafferty was one of the last Roman Catholic priests to be raised for the Scottish priesthood in Ireland at St Kieran's College, Kilkenny. This tradition has persisted since St Kieran's opened in 1782, the first seminary to be founded in Ireland after the end of the Penal Laws which restricted Roman Catholic religious practice.

Born in Garvagh, Co Derry, in 1933, Rafferty received his secondary education at St Columb's College, Derry, before

studying for the priesthood. He was ordained priest in 1957 for the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh in St Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny.

Rafferty was born into a family noted for its work for the Church. He had three cousins who were priests, two a Columban Father serving abroad, and a niece in religious life. He was a distant relative of Bishop Bernard O'Kane of Derry, the noted theologian and Classics

scholar, who is also remembered for his work in pioneering radio and his acquaintance with Marconi.

For 30 years after his ordination, Rafferty served successively in Linlithgow (1957-67), Dalkeith (1967-77) and North Berwick (1977-86). In 1989 he was appointed Vicar-General of the archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh, and the following year Auxiliary Bishop.

With the appointment of myself, a native of Ballycastle, Co

Antrim, as Bishop to St Andrews and Edinburgh in 1985, Cardinal Manning's recommendation to Rome in the mid-1980s that no Irish priest should ever be appointed to a Scottish diocese had at last been broken.

Manning had been appointed Apostolic Visitor to the Western District of Scotland by Propaganda Fide when a schism was threatened between the Highland Catholics and Irish immigrant Catholics. It was an added joy five years later when

the Auxiliary Bishop was named as Bishop Kevin Rafferty.

Kevin Rafferty was ever cool, calm, collected; he had a great grasp of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and all it entails, was tolerant and believed that the Lord is looking after the Church, whatever human failings there may be.

Although Assistant Bishop, Rafferty remained an active priest in the parish of Saints John Cantius and Nicholas, Broxburn. His pastoral care

was recognised by his brother bishops in the Scottish Episcopal Conference. He held appointments as Scottish National President of the Commission for Pastoral and Social Care and as national Spiritual Director of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

One of his annual delights was taking part in both the Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes and the Easter pilgrimage with the Handicapped Children's Pilgrimage Trust - at which he assisted as recently as

Easter Week. When asked about being a working chaplain with this pilgrimage, he simply replied: "It is what I want to do. I am a priest."

† Keith Patrick O'Brien

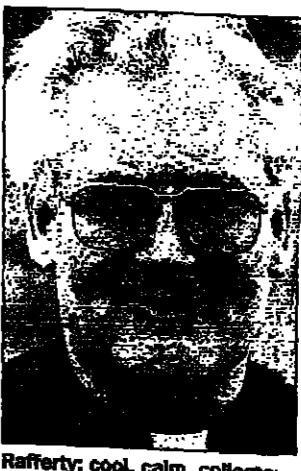
Kevin Lawrence Rafferty, priest; born Garvagh, Co Derry 24 June 1933; ordained priest 1957; Titular Bishop of Ausiaga and Bishop Auxiliary to Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh 1990-96; died Livingston, West Lothian 19 April 1996.

self-supporting for over 20 years at the Harbour Bookshop in Dartmouth. The by schoolboy who stammered, and who had been so unwilling that he thought you could send a telegram from a bank, became a successful bookseller and in the Sixties a passionate speaker on children and reading at meetings of PTA and the School Library Association. Loving Dartmouth, he was for years Chairman of the Dartmouth and Kingswear Association.

In recent years he performed acts of filial piety, though pious was the last thing he ever was. He unveiled a statue of Winnie the bear cub at the London Zoo, and was involved in the restoration of Poohsticks Bridge and in the establishment of a memorial to his father and E.H. Shepard in Ashdown Forest. He took a leading part in the fight to save the forest from development and oil exploration - not so much because of Pooh but because of the forest itself. He said he took the playground of his Sussex childhood with him wherever he went - and it was his childhood as much as the good years of his devoted partnership with Lesley that enabled him to write in the preface to *The Path Through the Trees* that he had indeed had a happy life.

Ann Thwaite

*Christopher Robin Milne, bookeller and writer; born London 21 August 1920; author of *The Enchanted Places* (1974), *The Path Through the Trees* (1979), *The Hollow on the Hill* (1982), *The Windfall* (1985), *The Open Garden* (1988); married 1948 Lesley de Selincourt (one daughter); died Totnes, Devon 20 April 1996.*



Rafferty: cool, calm, collected

BIRTHS

PINDER: On 23 March 1996 to Elizabeth Cairncross and Robert Pinder, a son (Calm).

WAKEMAN: On 15 April 1996, to Ruth (née Lloyd) and Sean, a daughter, Olivia Florence, a sister to Harriet Rose.

DEATHS

WOOD: George, of Loughborough, Leicestershire, aged 92 years, on 20 April 1996 after a short illness. Lecturer LCAD and handloom builder, late of Shepshed, Leicestershire. Cremation service at Loughborough Crematorium on Friday 26 April at 12 noon. Family flowers only, please.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

but donations if desired may be made to the Sue Ryder Hospice (cheques made payable to Sue Ryder Hospice) c/o Glims, 100 Bedford Street, London WC2E 7AS, telephone 01509 238912.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, please ring 0171-203 2011.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr M. Henley

and Miss S. E. Piggett

The engagement is announced between Mark, son of Mr and Mrs Charles Henley, of Hastings, and Susanna, daughter of Mr and Mrs Harry Piggett, of Holbrook, Derbyshire.

Mr A. D. Smith

and Miss C. S. Graham

The engagement is announced between Andrew, second son of Mr and Mrs John Smith, of New Mills, Der-

byshire, and Trinika, middle daughter of Sir Alexander and Lady Graham, of Whitwell, Herefordshire.

Birthdays

Mr Shirley Temple Black, former US ambassador, 65; The Most Rev Michael Bowen, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Southwark, 66; Mr Bill Cotton, chairman, Noel Gay Television, 74; Mr David Evans, MP, 61; Mr Harold French, actor and director, 99; Mr Leslie French, actor, singer and director, 92; Air Marshal

Sir Timothy Garden, Commandant, Royal College of Defence Studies, 52; The Hon Victoria Glendinning, author, 59; Mr William Hagerty, former Editor, *The People*, 71; Sir Arnold Hall, former chairman, Hawker Siddeley Group, 81; Sir Russell Hillhouse, Permanent Under-Secretary, Scottish Office, 58; Mr James Kirkup, author, 73; Dr Richard Law, Master, St Edmund's College, Cambridge, 70; Mr Tony Miles, chess player, 41; Mr Ronald Neame, film producer and director, 85; Professor George Steiner, former Professor of Comparative Literature, Oxford University, 67; Mr Walter Sweeney MP,

47; Mr Colin Welch, journalist, 72;

Miss Tessa Wyatt, actress, 48; Sir Eric Yarrow, former chairman, Clydesdale Bank, 76.

Anniversaries

Bishop William Shakespeare, playwright and poet, 1564; Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov, author, 1899; Deaths: William Shakespeare, playwright and poet, 1616; Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, author, 1610. Today is the Feast Day of St Aldehard (Wulstech) of Prague, Saints Felix, Fortunatus and Achilleus, St George the Martyr, St Gerard of Tou and St Ilar-

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of Edinburgh, Trustee, National Maritime Museum, attends a reception at St James's Palace; as President and Honorary Life Fellow of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, chairs the 1996 Prince Philip Lecture, followed by dinner, at 6 John Adam Street, London WC2. The Prince of Wales makes an official visit to Canada, opening the Parliament of Manitoba, New Brunswick and Ontario. The Princess Royal, Patron, Save the Children Fund, visits the new building at Rickmansworth Masonic School.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; F Company Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, 1pm. Prince Charles visits the Queen's Guard, 11.30am, and provides the new building at Rickmansworth Masonic School.

How liberal is new Labour?

Blair and Jack Straw will beat the law and order drum all the way to the election. Is their new conservatism a ploy to make the party more electable or does it reflect a deep-dyed Victorian moralism? **Polly Toynbee** reports

Now you see it, now you don't. New Labour flashes a bright coin before our eyes, only to flick it away as soon as we reach out to grasp it. Key words, ideas, sentiments and symbols are lit up before us, full of significance, moral catchphrases pregnant with diaphanous meaning – single parents, squeegee merchants, crime, bad neighbours, community and self-reliance. But as soon as we challenge them and ask what they mean, what policy, what practical applications? Then the words vanish again like a mirage.

They have served their purpose, just by being spoken. The party has planted an idea, staked out a territory and told the world that new Labour is moral, sensible, not chained to the politically correct and far removed from the bad old days of the GLC's myriad minority committees. But has Labour's traditional role as standard-bearer for liberal progressive values departed, too? Or is it merely hiding behind the conjurer's fingers?

Like playing on a xylophone of our sensibilities, Labour has brilliantly struck raw Tory voting nerves, beating out a new tune that is often distinctly right wing in timbre: Christian Democrat, churchy, decent, disciplinarian and orderly (Straw: "The first duty of any government should be the guarantee of a quiet life").

Gone is the praise for pluralism, freedom and diversity, that instinctive liberal siding with the under-dog. Sometimes the under-dog or "aggressive beggar" even gets an extra kicking from Labour. Do they mean all this, or is it just the cleverly seductive music of vote-getting?

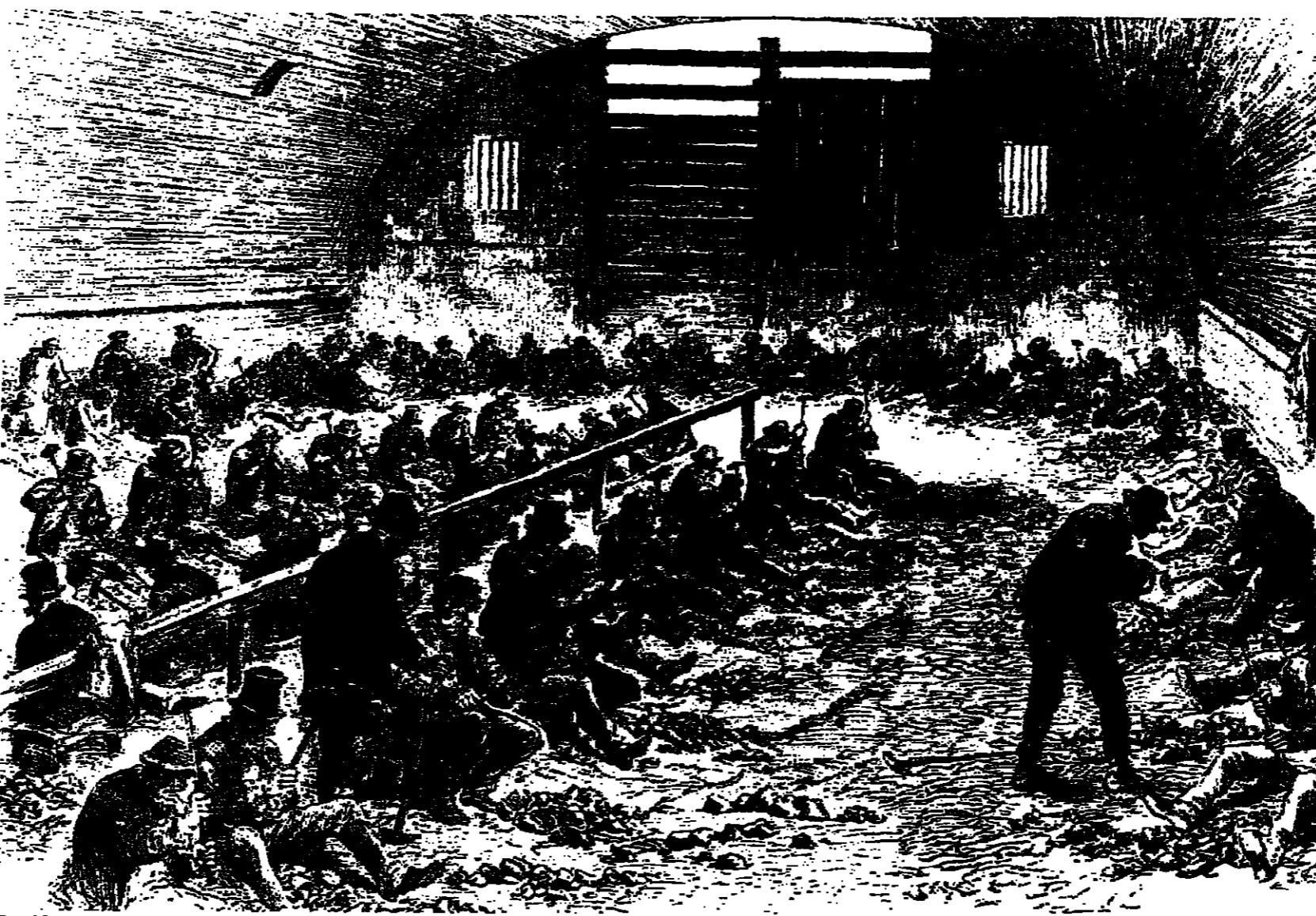
We do not know. No policy is set, no promises made and different players play different tunes to suit their audiences. We can only guess at what the final symphony will be.

It would be quite wrong to imagine, though, that Labour was ever a happily liberal party. Harold Wilson lead a canny coalition of Hampstead and Huyton, the chattering classes coming to an accommodation with the cloth caps, encompassing both Roy Jenkins the radical reformer, and Jim Callaghan the policeman's friend. There was a tacit trade-off: the illiberal "hang 'em, flog 'em" cloth caps agreed to let the chattering abolish capital punishment and anti-homosexual laws in exchange for the closed shop and collective bargaining.

All that fell apart in chaos when Michael Foot could restrain neither a trade unionism that had become rampant and irresponsible nor a liberal left that had been overrun by the right-on lunacies of the likes of Ken Livingstone.

Now Tony Blair emerges as the gleaming phoenix, not rebuilding the old party but creating a new one. Yet in Hampstead they fear that liberal interests have been abandoned in a new marriage of convenience that excludes them altogether – the self-interest and crude populism of Essex wedded to the morality of the Christian Church. Neither of these is to their taste.

It has fallen to Paddy Ashdown to fire a warning shot in a thoughtful, but impassioned speech last month, staking out a clear Liberal Democrat claim to those old liberal values left behind by new Labour. While making clear his broad approval for most of what new Labour stands for – after all, he hopes to do business with them – he has found some clear pink water that



The 19th-century workhouse: Tony Blair believes in workfare because it is morally uplifting for the unemployed

gives voting Liberal a genuinely different flavour. He plants the thought that the best possible outcome of the next election would be New Labour in coalition with Lib Dems, vote-catching Christianity tempered by decent caring old unelectable liberalism.

Ashdown points with alarm to Labour's infatuation with American communitarianism and the work of Amitai Etzioni, the high priest of new left moralism. He fears this tyranny of the majority crushes any dissenting voice, ruling by collective shame through the law of the lace curtain. Lib Dems distrust Labour's commitment to constitutional reform: for them, it is the only true guarantee that locks genuine pluralism into politics for ever.

Ashdown looks with anxiety at Labour's eagerness to make a scapegoat of the underclass. He despises the way Labour avoids unpopular issues of conscience. While he spoke up boldly for the rights of

Hong Kong citizens to come to Britain, Labour did not. Tony Blair took a trip around the Far East that missed out tricky Hong Kong altogether and he came back instead full of alarming praise for orderly Singaporean values, where chewing gum,

side of the losers as well as the wealth-creators? Hattersley sets his benchmark for the party's liberal values: "The two great liberal tests are the party's attitudes to ethnic minorities and immigration law, and penal reform. I understand why electoral

How much will you be taxed?

In the run-up to the 1992 election Hamish McRae launched a devastating critique of Labour's tax plans. In tomorrow's *Independent* he runs his slide rule over Gordon Brown's plans to calculate the top rate of tax you are likely to pay under a Tony Blair government. So if you want to know how much Labour will take from your pay packet, don't miss his analysis.

spitting and graffiti earn the lash, and conformity is the one great social value.

Roy Hattersley has, with some self-mockery, set up his stall as the "New Left".

He and plenty of other backbench voices

worry that Labour has lost interest in the under-dogs, those without rights and power. In government, will it be a radical reforming party? Will it be clearly on the

pressures make the party cautious on both but it is absolutely essential they take a strong stand."

These tests will fall upon the Home Secretary, so it is Jack Straw who draws the fire and fury from Labour's old liberals,

as he beats the law and order drum to

please the Essex crowds. He, though, is as

quick with the disappearing coin as any of

them. Hardly had I opened my mouth to ask to see the party's liberal credentials than he hastened to ladle out praise for Roy Jenkins as the greatest reforming Home Secretary of all time – on private sexual behaviour, on race and capital punishment.

Now what does this admiration of Jenkins signify? It is easy now to praise with these long-dead reforms, but where are his own brave and unpopular policies, pursued fearlessly for their justice alone? What might equivalent bravery be now? Perhaps a will-

iness to open a debate, at least, on legalising cannabis? Perhaps a meaningful discourse on the future of the monarchy? On these things much of the country remains – but not Parliament, and certainly not new Labour.

"I am well aware of how I am perceived," Jack Straw says, with a rueful smile. A list follows: he voted to lower the

homosexual age of consent to 16; he was brought up very well by a single mum, and sees no problem with one-parent families *per se* ("although I know that's not Tony's view").

He would repeal "most of" the Asylum Bill and make immigration law fairer. Would everyone born here be given back the right to citizenship? "We haven't finally decided." On penal reform, as the prison population has rocketed under Howard, can he say whether it will come down again under his policies? No, he can't say for sure.

His critics say he follows Michael Howard like a true shadow, no glimmer of daylight between them. He replies that if Michael Howard devotes himself single-mindedly to digging large elephant traps for Labour – the Asylum Bill is a prime example – he is not going to be stupid enough to oblige them by jumping in.

Times have changed since Jenkins' day. Looking back at both Labour and Tory old manifestos, crime barely featured although it tops voters' concerns. Many colleagues who are deeply liberal by instinct have had the sobering experience of confronting desperate Labour voters on estates plagued by marauding gangs of youths, unchecked by police or courts. What is "liberal" about letting communities of decent poor people suffer at their hands?

In the end, though, we are left looking into his eyes, listening to the spaces between his words and guessing what kind of Home Secretary he will be. In the end, despite the necessary law-and-order sabre-rattling, it is probable that he will make a respectably liberal fist of it. After Howard, he will blow like a cool wind of reason through the fetid air of the Home Office corridors. He may not mean what some of his words seek to suggest, but he is a Wilsonian figure, delicately balancing reasonable freedom with reasonable concern about crime.

Now does Tony Blair really mean what he says? Little of what he has said can be pinned on him. In one useful sound bite he is "the party of the family", but with the next breath he explains this means practical help for working mothers – so the magic coin "family values" is cleverly dispensed in a public place.

The Hattersley tendency says Blair means what he says.

One says: "He is all of a piece and not pretending. He does quite like the idea of bad young men being marched about in camps. He has a passion about single parents and a genuine anxiety for the welfare of their disadvantaged children. Workfare appeals to him because it is for the real moral good of the unemployed. He would play the Good Samaritan, but would feel obliged to ask penetrating questions about whether the victim had contributed in some way to his plight."

There is little cynicism in Tony Blair; it comes from the heart and that is what scares old liberals. They would rather believe this was all a clever electoral trick: once in power he will cast off his cloak and with one bound we shall all be free. But that Victorian moralism is deep-dyed. It demands a balance between rights and responsibilities, between individualism and community, between family and sexual liberty, discipline and freedom. In this he talks not only to the electors, but to God.

DIARY

For Tories, it's a matter of opinion

Brian Mawhinney (below), the Conservative Party chairman, has hired ICM to carry out opinion polls in the run-up to the election. You know, opinion polls, those things Tories don't believe in because they got it wrong last time. And doesn't ICM sound familiar? Doesn't ICM do polls for the *Guardian*? Doesn't it also use rival pollster NOP's field force for face-to-face interviews? And doesn't NOP work for the Labour Party? "I think they'll use a different subcontractor for their Tory party work," says a well-placed source.

I hear that some of the Tory campaign team preferred the presentation from Harris, the only other firm to pitch for the work. The team included Sir Tim Bell, Margaret Thatcher's favourite PR man, Peter Gummer, another PR man and brother of the Environment Secretary, Charles Lewington, the new head of communications at Conservative Central Office, and Tim Collins, his predecessor, now a Tory candidate but retained as a consultant by Dr Mawhinney.

Harris offered a new technique called trade-off analysis. This works by offering interviewees choices between "non-ideal scenarios", such as higher taxes or worse schools. This was of course totally unrealistic because under the Tories you can have both. So Dr Mawhinney took the closely-guarded secret decision to hire ICM.

But why them? Could it be that ICM happens to use a technique for adjusting its polling figures which has produced the most pro-Tory results of any of the main polling companies.

Current affairs and a talking princess

I am a little bemused at Martin Bashir's Panorama interview with the Princess of Wales winning the Bafta prize for Best Talk Show. Talk show? Probing, incisive interview with great relevance to the constitution and future of the monarchy, surely. There I was labouring under the delusion that *Panorama* might want to

be considered in the best documentary category, or best factual series. But now we know. *Panorama* is in fact a talk show, with the biggest budget the BBC has ever given to a talk show. *Panorama's* editor, Steve Hewlett, tells me: "It wasn't a talk show in the conventional sense, but it's a big prize and we're delighted." If it really was so keen to throw off its current affairs pedigree, then surely it should have entered the Princess of Wales interview under a more appropriate category – best drama? Not quite. Best light entertainment? Almost. Best actress? Aah.

Emma's 'ere

Who could fail to be impressed with the way Emma Thompson's accent at the Bafta awards had journeyed further down the road towards Bow? Has Emma (below), the proud winner of the British film industry's highest accolade, given in to mob pronunciation? Far from it, according to our friend the Professor of Demotic Linguistics at the University of Neasden.

"He trained ear," he told us, "can tell at once that Miss Thompson's consonantal laconia in the middle of the word 'British' is a long way from being the glottal stop of a dropped 't'. Nor is it the preglottal Teutonic *Verschlusslaute*, so beloved of Mr Freddie Trueman in the opening aspiration of such words as 'Ampshire'. For her, the 't' in 'British' is not so much dropped as casually cast aside in what we term 'Rada Cockney' and replaced by a gently articulated allophone of a quality that I have detected in only one other speaker."

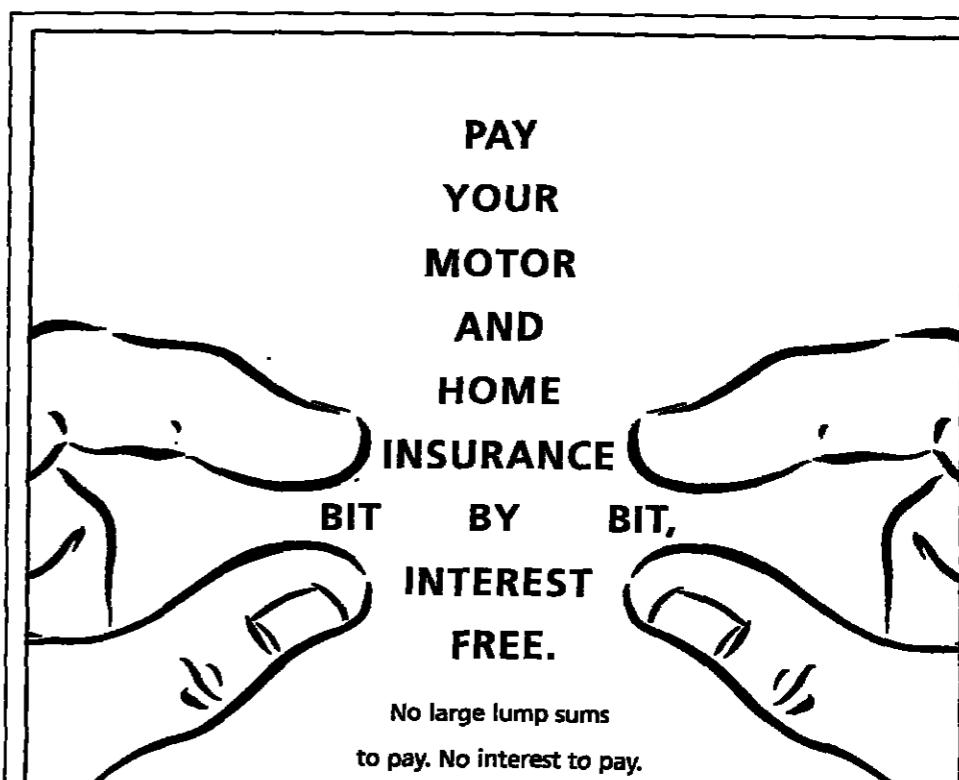
He paused to give added effect to his final revelation. "I think you'll find, if you listen carefully," he said, "that the sound of Emma's neo-Cockneyt 't' is precisely the same glottal occlusion that comes between 'an' and the Bottomley 'otel'."

No longer the willing laird

Once a fully restored Georgian neo-classical mansion in Dunfermline with lovely gardens and sporting links? The Olympic gold medal runner Steve Cram has put his Scottish stately home on the market and is asking £1.5m for it. *Hammond House* in Ayr was built in 1812 for the Marquess of Queensberry (well known for inventing the rules for boxing) and designed by Sir Robert Smirke, architect of the British Museum. It came into Oveit's hands in the mid-1980s when he bought it for £750,000 from an absentee Australian Olympic swimmer, of course, an amateur sport. But Oveit won his money, notoriety and TV work in America following his successes. Eight years and £1.5m later, when he has restored it to American standards – modern pool, gym, sauna and games room – and an orangery, he is no longer practical. "He is very busy travelling, doing consultancy and work with the international athletic boards." The future owner can also boast another famous link, although not of the sporting kind. Oscar Wilde was a frequent visitor and it was his association with the Marquess of Queensberry's son, Lord Alfred Douglas, that led to his imprisonment.

Words to the slaughter

The newspeak of Orwell's 1984 lives. At the Select Committee on Agricultural



GA
General Accident Direct
MOTOR INSURANCE • BUILDINGS & CONTENTS
0800 121 000 • 0800 121 004
PAY BY INSTALMENTS INTEREST FREE
REDUNDANCY & SICKNESS 0800 121 008 • TRAVEL 0800 121 007
Weekdays 8am - 8pm, Sat 9am - 5pm.
*Written details on request. General Accident Direct, FREEPOST, Hamilton ML3 1BR.
http://www.ga.co.uk/gadirect

THE INDEPENDENT

FOUNDED 1986

ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON E14 5DL
TELEPHONE 0171-293 2000/0171-345 2000 FAX 0171-293 2435/0171-345 2435

EDITOR: Charles Wilson

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Charles Leadbitter MANAGING EDITOR: Colin Hughes
SECTION TWO EDITOR: Simon Kehoe EXECUTIVE NEWS EDITOR: Michael Williams
NIGHT EDITOR: Richard Holledge

NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING PLC BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Liam Hesly (Chairman) · Lord Borrie · Ben Bradlee · Jean Luis Cebrian · Brendan Hopkins
David Montgomery · Javier Diaz de Polanco · Cornel Riklin · Andreas Whittem Smith
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR: Jeremy Reed

Italy turns left to normality

The Cold War ended in Berlin in 1989, except in Italy, where it came to a close early yesterday. The centre-left has won a famous general election victory whose symbolism outweighs the coalition's lack of a clear majority in the legislative assembly. Since the Second World War, the "loss" of Italy to the Marxist left was a spectre that haunted the corridors of power, from the Vatican to the State Department in Washington. The remarkable performance of Communists in Italian local government was one thing; they had to be kept out of Rome.

No longer. They have changed as the world has changed around them. Earlier this month President Bill Clinton said, in a throwaway remark, he could live with a left victory: it was as significant in its way as the Catholic bishops' declaration of neutrality in the contest. What used to be Western Europe's strongest Communist Party now confronts power in a capitalist democracy, albeit shared with the technocrats, bankers and industrialists who sit on the bushy branches of the centre-left's "Olive Tree" coalition.

This is a further step in the delivery of Europe from the old politics of an era now over. Here, it cast a heavy shadow over the Eurosceptic assertion that an anti-EMU, anti-Brussels tide is running on the Continent. Of course the "European" dimension to politics in each of the member states belies easy generalisation. Yet in Italy there is what is sadly lacking in this country, a broad and open agreement between left and right on how essential it is for both Italy as exporter and Italy the moderniser to deepen the European connection. It is hard not to be impressed by the sense, south of the Alps, of how the European Union still rides the wave of the future.

The Olive coalition has much mettle to prove. Everything depends on the Party of the Democratic Left, as the former Communists call themselves. Will Massimo D'Alema pull the trick so stylishly accomplished a decade ago by Felipe Gonzalez in Spain and make the left, for a while at least, the natural party of government?

Thank the banks for our tunnel

There is a rumour that Sir Alastair Morton, the chairman of Eurotunnel, may be one of the last members of a lonely band of international socialists known as Trotskyites who stand outside propaganda sheets and railing against the power of international banks. Sir Alastair has been far more successful in hitting international finance capital where it hurts than a century of angry Marxists. He has borrowed huge sums from the banks, between £8bn and £9bn is the latest estimate. Yesterday he confirmed what they already knew: that he would not be able to repay much if any of the interest, let alone the principal.

Sir Alastair's place in history is assured. Arrogant and domineering, with a huge appetite for rows, nevertheless he has got the tunnel built and operating without the taxpayer stamping up the money. There has always been a suspicion that Sir Alastair believed the important thing was to get the tunnel built; how it was paid for would be a side issue.

It will not feel like a side issue for thousands of private investors who have lost their money. One once fashionable broker's theory was that the tunnel would be

According to Romano Prodi, the Olive Tree's Prime Minister-designate, the project is "capitalism tempered by public initiative". It remains to be seen whether that amounts to a recognition, now widely accepted by the left elsewhere, of the power of international money and markets. One thing is for sure, in a country that has recently moved to abandon exchange controls, acceptance cannot be far off.

Reforming the state's parlous finances will be vital if Italy is to meet the Maastricht criteria for economic and monetary union. The lira's recent appreciation against the German mark will not absolve the Italian government from making inroads into a public debt that is almost exactly twice what the Germans – and the markets – consider safe. In the election Romano Prodi found impressive amounts of common ground with Silvio Berlusconi over tax reform. But hacking through Italy's rank undergrowth of taxes will require Mr Prodi to see off interest groups, which may include entire regions.

After fiscal reform, the priority is political and constitutional reform. On the good governance list are further privatisation, the reform of corporate governance (a Prodi speciality) and crime and corruption. The last two are related. The scandal of modern Italy remains the impoverishment of the south, and the continuing potency of organised crime. This agenda of political reform will test any government.

Few Italian politicians have clean hands – even Mr Prodi has allegations hanging over his head. The hothouse of Roman politics is not suddenly going to cool. It is likely that, like many other Italian governments before, this one will suffer from scandals and splits.

Yet that should not blind us to the historical import of the left's final accession to power. The regrouping and rise of the left must be healthy for Italian democracy. And what is good for Italy, a member of G7 and often (if the British government could ever do Euro-politics properly) a British ally within the Union, is good for this country, too.



I say, now we are all middle class, why don't you and Jane come round for a nice bottle of Chablis?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lebanon: pawn in an endless war game

Sir: I was interested to hear that on Monday 15 April Michael Portillo "would not regard the Israeli reaction as disproportionate". From Thursday 11 April to Tuesday 16 April I was in Lebanon. I was in the home of a Lebanon family and had no answer to the tearful cry of their 14-year-old daughter, "Why are they doing this to our country again?"

I could only listen in silence to the lament of my friend as he faced hundreds of refugees seeking shelter in his school that was due to reopen for students the next day after the Easter holiday.

And much of that listening was done in the dark as Israeli rockets had destroyed two power stations in Beirut that had been rebuilt earlier this year after the expenditure of millions of pounds. I stood in the Bekaa valley and watched Israeli war planes circling overhead throughout the day, seeking their targets and watching

their destruction – unchallenged, for Lebanon has no air force. This is not Lebanon's war and Lebanon cannot stop it. The war will only stop when the world puts enough pressure on Israel and Syria that they stop treating Lebanon as a pawn in their endless war game and sort out their differences around the table instead of through the buffer of an innocent people. I returned to Britain saddened at what I had seen and angered at the indifference of so many of the world's so-called superpowers.

Maybe after the continuing slaughter, which now includes the killing of UN soldiers and refugees who had taken shelter with them, the Israeli response will be seen for what it is – disproportionate. But how much better if that had been the response of the world at the beginning.

RICHARD CLARK
Broxbourne, Hertfordshire

Green farm aid fails to add up

Sir: Naomi Katz writes (letter, 17 April) that "people have short memories". There appears to be a tendency to forget that Israel was created without the consent of the Palestinian people who inhabited this region for centuries. Any person who settles in Israel should reasonably expect some measure of resistance from the Palestinians and groups sympathetic to their cause, as is the case with any invaded territory. Israel was created by sheer military might and has continued to exist through this power.

ALESSANDRO ANSA
Aston, Birmingham

Sir: As long as the Jews are perceived as victims, peace and justice will never be achieved in the Middle East.

YAHYA SHEIKHO
Chester

because those who drew it up knew or thought little about the technical aspects of organic production, the end result is that we, and most organic farmers, are losing out.

RICHARD YOUNG
Broadway, Worcestershire

Sir: It is wrong to say that "organic farming relies on the use of organic fertilisers" ("Go organic? Let us spray ...", 10 April). Organic farming relies on sustaining the fertility of the soil, by enhancing and stimulating microbial activity and encouraging the presence of humus. Of course animal manures play a vital part but, since organic farming by definition is rotational, the manures are normally produced on the farm as part of the operation, and not brought in from outside.

Organic farmers everywhere are closely in touch with their customers, and the proliferation of "vegbox schemes" which supply organic food that is really fresh at low prices to all sorts of households, has been one of the most exciting changes in food marketing in recent years, and is driving the introduction of new schemes to make more land available for the production of the increased supplies that are needed.

HILARY JONES
Egerton, Kent

If we abandoned organic methods (after 22 years) and used sprays and fertilisers on this field we would receive between £10.12 and £210.59 per acre or £3,676 and £7,160 per annum depending on the crop we chose – a potential £28,640 over the four years.

I am sure the current subsidy system was not conceived to penalise organic farmers. But

The benefit in cutting pollution has been equally dramatic. I can now drive from near Truro to Perth, Swansea, Dover or Newcastle in economy fifth gear all the way, instead of grinding through towns having to use first and second gear. Even with the lower car population of 20 years ago I once took 12 hours from London to here, which now takes less than five.

Iraqi opposition denies bombings

Sir: We refer to Patrick Cockburn's article "Clinton backed Baghdad bombers" (26 March). Before offering this reply, we had to review the two versions of the video film on which Mr Cockburn based his article.

The story is a cheap attempt by those who produced the video and passed additional misinformation to Mr Cockburn to defame the Iraqi National Accord and its leadership. We wonder if Mr Cockburn has any additional evidence, apart from a video made by an unidentified person who goes under the pseudonym of Abu Amine al-Khadami. The harsh living conditions in Iraqi Kurdistan push many people to desperate measures to survive. The production of this video is one such example. Most of the video is taken up by innuendoes about who paid whom and how much is owed to him for his imaginary services. Those who understand Iraqi dialect would notice that Mr Khadami states that Al-Wifaq (Iraqi National Accord) has no capability of making bombs and have not been involved in any operation inside Iraq. He claims that he and his team alone are capable of perpetrating such acts.

Mr Khadami has never been a member of INA, and we have not at any time, neither do we intend now to enter into any bombing campaign or activities that might endanger the life of innocent civilians. If Mr Khadami was involved in a bombing campaign in Baghdad or Mosul, then it must have been on behalf of other organisations.

Who produced hundreds of copies of the video for distribution in Iraq Kurdistan, and who produced over 2,000 copies in Holland and posted them to Iraqis in the UK, Europe and USA? We believe this is a well-orchestrated campaign against the INA and its leaders.

S A SHAHRYAR
Iraqi National Accord
London SW2

Sir: My son has an honours degree in English and philosophy, an MA in English and in his spare time is studying for a master's in media studies.

If only I hadn't let him suck a dummy, who knows the heights to which he would have risen.

MARGARET WAKELING
Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire

How

Unfair to cowboys

Sir: The vilification of cowboys ("Classroom Cowboys", letter, 17 April) has gone on for far too long and it is high time it came to an end – just imagine the uproar there would be had you referred to "classroom shepherds". The derogatory use of the job description "cowboy" must surely traverse one or other of the many pieces of recent legislation – equal opportunities or race relations? And another thing, should it not be "cowperson"?

MAURICE MORGAN
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire

GUY MATTHEWS
Windermere, Cumbria

Sheep in Grasmere Vale
Suffer intimations of
immortality

Hevellyn looks big
From the far off lake: up close
It looks bloody huge

After such a promising start, it is a pity he never continued, but then he would never say in 17 syllables what he could say in 170.

GUY MATTHEWS
Windermere, Cumbria

All in favour of black sweaters, say 'aye'



MILES KINGTON

and a man, you might as well get your grammar right.

Sillitoe: I don't care about your south-

ern grammar! You can sell out if you like.

Wain: Wain! You sicken me! You can

talk proper and end up in Oxford. If

you like! I'm northern and I'm angry!

Braine: Northern? That looks like the

bloody Midlands from Bradford,

where I come from!

Kingsley: Listen, lads, we'll

never get anywhere if we bicker and

fight. This is all very angry, but we're

only being angry with each other.

We're here for a purpose.

Braine: And what is that purpose, O

posh one?

Braine: I mean, you've got a pony

Christian name, ie Kingsley, you write

pony rhyming verse, you write pony

middle-class books, you like pony

traditional jazz and you don't smell like an angry young man to me.

Amis: Oh, come on! Lucky Jim was a

very angry novel. Picture Post said so.

Braine: Angry, my arse. Jim Dixon was

as angry as a National Serviceman who finds the pubs have just shut.

At this moment the door opens and

Kenneth Tynan looks in.

Tynan: Hi there, you angry young

things! Anyone finished any plays

today that I can take away and plug?

Osborne: Piss off!

Tynan: I like it! Keep the anger up!

He pissed off.

Amis: Listen, everybody, this is get-

ting nowhere. I propose we have a

vote. All those in favour of being

angry! All those against? Right, that's

11 for being angry ... and me against.

Arnold Wesker: Bloody hell! There's

always one, isn't there? Always one

smart ass who thinks who knows bet-

ter. Tell us, Kingsley, why you aren't

angry?

Amis: Because one day I want to grow

up. I want to have prizes for my nov-

els and have my collected letters pub-

lished. I want to join the Garrick and

write about wine seriously ...

Colin Wilson: You'll be telling us you

want a knighthood next.

Amis: Too bleeding right, mate.

Wain: May I just say something?

Amis: Yes, John.

Wain: I want to change my vote to non-angry. Kingsley has a good point.

Amis: That's 10-2.

Shelagh Delaney: I don't believe it!

This is crazy! We met to decide how

to develop our anger and now we're

even going back on that!

Amis: I didn't know there were any

comment

Why one man's beef is good for us all

James Goldsmith's call for a referendum on Europe highlights the gap between people and politicians

Why is Sir James Goldsmith like a mad cow? The answer is that both are pushing the argument about European integration out of the Tory party and into the consciousness of the nation as a whole. The anti-Conservative referendum campaign and popular anger over the beef ban are breaking open Eurosceptic politics. From now on, they represent something that will have to be resolved by the people, rather than simply by the government whips' office.

This is good news, though it may not feel that way for many decent, pro-European politicians. The beef industry, like the plight of the British fishing fleet, is one of those issues that generally has negative chattering class appeal. Among the metropolitan political élite it is a low-interest subject: it can leap briefly to the top of the political agenda when a public health disaster seems possible, but then it sinks away. It has none of the perennial interest of, say, John Major's relations with Kenneth Clarke.

Away from Westminster, however, it looks very large indeed. It interests people and affects them in a basic way. It is just the sort of issue that, coming at a critical moment, can change national perceptions about politics.

Dissident politicians can bang on for ever about Maastricht or the sovereignty of Parliament or the Single European Act, and fail to stir the vast uninterest of middle Britain. But beef bans and the possibility of retaliation against French apples, or wine, or whatever, rouses instant attention. It twists the lion's tail. It raises old, half-dead devils.

In some ways this is regrettable. It smacks of populism and illogic. Should we really be blaming European commissioners, rather than our own standards on the use of animal feed and pesticides, for what happened to beef farms? The Common Fisheries Policy has damaged the interests of trawler crews and coastal towns around Britain, but the shortage of Atlantic and North Sea fish has more to do with a technology that has grown too good for its own good.

Yet our national fright when the BSE story first broke has been quickly replaced by national outrage at the European ban that followed it. A public health story has jumped the journalistic species-barrier to become a story about European integration. It is as if our emotional reaction to the fear of brain-rotting meat has been transferred. Though this was a nightmare hatched at home, already the politicians and diplomats have been trying to calm this savage spirit.

But the island tribes have their truth, too. In this case, if the proposal is that authority should be passed to a supranational level, in order to achieve greater prosperity, but without a difficult democratic argument first, then Britain may be the first country to say no. But we will not be the last.

Enter Sir James Goldsmith, stage right, ice-blue eyes alight, demanding a referendum on "who governs Britain"? He doesn't want to fight, but, by jingo, if he does, he has the men, he has the £20m and he has the manifesto, too.

Except, of course, that he does want to fight. Having had the opportunity to talk and argue with him about free

mankind's old habit of blaming the strange-vowed folk next door for local failures, then all this stuff about beef and fish is mere regression. For nearly half a century, smooth politicians and diplomats have been trying to calm this savage spirit.

But the island tribes have their truth, too. In this case, if the proposal is that authority should be passed to a supranational level, in order to achieve greater prosperity, but without a difficult democratic argument first, then Britain may be the first country to say no. But we will not be the last.

Enter Sir James Goldsmith, stage right, ice-blue eyes alight, demanding a referendum on "who governs Britain"? He doesn't want to fight, but, by jingo, if he does, he has the men, he has the £20m and he has the manifesto, too.

Except, of course, that he does want to fight. Having had the opportunity to talk and argue with him about free

trade, I have no illusions about his capacity. Mocked, feared and reviled by some, he is a man of huge energy and serious intelligence. Like many business tycoons, it is not a reflective intelligence, but a focused, passionate one. His mind is less a library than an armoury - gleaming fact-bunker, bang up to date and stocked for offensive operations.

He seems determined to help split the Tory party and grab his place in history as someone who forced the European issue into the forefront of a general election. As a protectionist and an environmentalist, he makes odd company for almost all the Tory right. Government ministers splutter incoherently about the outrage of Sir James as a rich man trying to buy his way into a political argument. So, they are against opinionated billionaires all of a sudden? What about the guys who fund their party and their careers?

Sir James, meanwhile, is lucky in his timing: the Government is failing desperately and under terrible internal pressure from its dissident nationalists. Their would-be leader, John Redwood, is to talk about a referendum with Goldsmith. The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, is already being vindicated in his misgivings about the ratchet-effect of conceding a limited referendum (on the single currency) and then being put under pressure to go further.

But the current "pro-European" and "anti-European" positions on the referendum question are almost entirely the wrong way round. If the question is asked Goldsmith's way, as a straightforward pro-EU or anti-EU choice, then Britain remains likelier

to go for integration than full independence. But then, Sir James was always brilliant-draft.

What of Britain's pro-EU politicians who mostly want to negotiate a new political order for Europe that involves sharing power and decisions while retaining ultimate sovereignty (the right to say no) with the old nations? They have nothing to lose by a referendum - or, indeed, by further referendums in the future. It has been the covert and elitist nature of the EU project that has always been its most offensive aspect. Without an emphatic popular mandate, regularly renewed, these schemes are doomed.

The pro-referendum movement may be misguided in its nationalism, but it deserves support in principle from all good democrats. And in the end, it is no good complaining about populist anger over the beef ban or the partial destruction of the British fishing industry. Political integration will never eradicate strong local feelings or competition for markets and resources. To treat these as the Old Adam, an ancient European failing which can be healed by directives from commissioners, is a fatal failure of imagination.

Better by far to recognise the beef as a useful warning of things to come - under any system - and read its message now. If politicians have been shocked by the combination of the referendum campaign and the beef crisis, the shock has been salutary. A politics that forgets the basics - jobs and democracy - is dangerous stuff. Sir James, the reviled outsider, is wrong about many things. But he is right about that.

Taking the fizz out of Oddbins

Anthony Rose laments the possible loss of an innovator in quality high-street wine

Oddbins up for sale. Again. Not for the first time, rumours that parent company Seagram have decided to divest themselves of their innovative and popular high street chain have drawn the now predictable tight-lipped response - "it's only speculation" - from Wimbledon head office. This time the rumours are hotter than ever, with names such as Greenalls, Cellars and Tesco among the most favoured front-runners.

Against the general down-market trend, Oddbins has consistently held out against cutting quality corners. The chain's buyers, led by the indefatigable John Ratcliffe and Steve Daniel, gleefully trod heavily on the toes of the independent wine trade when, three years ago, they took the highly successful gamble of offering customers a range of upper crust 1992 white burgundies. The cachet extends to malt whiskies

With its anarchic Ralph Steadman image, Oddbins has set the tone

and a thicket of traditional British and premium imported beers and lagers.

The big brewery-owned chains have followed suit with their own Oddbins-style chains. Thresher and Victoria Wine chains with over 1,500 stores apiece. Yet it has become a byword for an unequalled range of quality wines and the enthusiastic service offered by its laid-back staff. An Oddbins-less high street might represent a short-term victory for the bean counters, but a cheerless wake for the modern era of fun and innovation in wine.

Oddbins was founded in 1963 by the eccentric entrepreneur Ahmed Pocher, a now legendary wine trade figure still occasionally sighted wheeling-dealing his way through the cash and carries of Britain. In the days of brewery brands and basic claret, Pocher and his kindred spirit, Brian Barnett of Augustus Barnett, took maximum advantage of the end of Resale Price Maintenance.

Slashing profit margins to the bone, they bounced out the traditional stockholding, high-margin middleman, shipping 100-odd cases of wine from here, there and everywhere straight to store. Ill-assorted jumbles of wines spilling out of barrels onto wooden floors typified a welcome new, customer-friendly approach to wine retailing.

When the old Peter Dominics and Augustus Barnett's were swallowed up by corporate predators, the purchase of Oddbins' 54 stores by the spirits giant Seagram for £3.6m in 1984 seemed to usher in the end of an exciting era of expansion and innovation. In fact it was just the beginning. By having the foresight to give its globetrotting buyers *carte blanche*, Seagram maintained Oddbins' spirit of independence-cum-fun.

Competitors might be expected to be laughing into their designer beers at Oddbins' current discomfort, but the more realistic among them recognise that the loss of Oddbins would make the world of wine a poorer place. With its unstuffiness and anarchic Ralph Steadman image, Oddbins has set the tone and standard of the modern off-licence. Its loss would be nobody's gain.

An olive branch to democracy

The triumph of the Olive Tree coalition could herald a more stable era in Italian politics, says Andrew Gumbel

The victory may not have been overwhelming and the road ahead may still be rocky, but the Italian centre-left's winning vote suggests the beginning of a new era. The triumph of the left after 50 years of exclusion from national government proves that the country is finally coming to terms with the normal rules of Western democracy, whereby power alternates from one main bloc to another.

Romano Prodi and his Olive Tree coalition will not have a free run, since they won an absolute majority only in the Senate, the upper house of parliament. In the Chamber of Deputies, they will have to rely on the co-operation of either the far-left

Italy stands a real chance of dispensing with its cycle of corrupt coalitions

Rifondazione Comunista, with whom they had an electoral pact but almost no policy points in common, or the Northern League, the volatile separatist movement which cashed in on a massive protest vote in Lombardy and the region around Venice. But if they can negotiate a viable *modus vivendi*, Italy stands a real chance of dispensing with its unvarying cycle of unstable governments and corrupt cross-party coalitions.

The new government's first and most important task will be to prepare Italy for Europe, streamlining the state apparatus to bring the country's runaway public debt under control and to restructure the overcomplicated, much abused tax system. But Mr Prodi has also promised to open negotiations with the opposition on institutional reform, including a new electoral law to replace Italy's messy hybrid of proportional representation and first-past-the-post.

What form the new system will take is not clear - there is talk of copying the American system, the French system, the German system, even the



Supporters of the centre-left Olive Tree celebrate at a rally in Rome

with false starts and renewed instability. The new electoral system, approved by referendum in 1993, only increased the number of parties in parliament, and it failed to provide a durable working majority when the media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi swept into power at the head of a new conservative coalition in March 1994.

Mr Berlusconi's victory was hailed as a new beginning, a Thatcherite revolution in the making and the birth of a new political animal, the entrepreneur as leader. But Mr Berlusconi was steeped in the old system, owing much of his success to his friendship with the now disgraced Socialist Party leader Bettino Craxi; and in his brief period

One can envisage a new moderate left and a new moderate right evolving

in office he vigorously pursued his own interests rather than the country's.

The Berlusconi phenomenon now looks like an aberration, not a new start. The man himself is on trial for tax fraud and faces further judicial investigation into his business practices. It seems safe to predict that the next few years will see a realignment on the right, with moderate voters of Mr Berlusconi's Forza Italia party coalescing around a new leader and the reformed neo-fascist National Alliance pushed back to the fringes.

Mr Prodi's Olive Tree coalition is essentially an anti-Berlusconi alliance rather than a true force of the left - it includes, for example, the free-marketeering Lamberto Dini, the outgoing prime minister. But if institutional and electoral reforms go through as planned, one can envisage a new left and a new moderate right evolving out of the present blocs, in time for the next election, and a durable two-party system taking shape. The modernisation of Italy and the stability of its parliamentary democracy will depend on it.

The years since have been fraught

WWF IS WORKING HARD TO SAVE ENDANGERED SPECIES. Here's how to give us extra financial help — at no extra cost to you — without endangering your own finances!

Simply switch to the WWF Visa Card:

- No annual fee
- Low purchase interest rate — just 18.9% APR (variable)
- Pay off existing borrowing at only 13.9% APR, fixed for six months

Plus, WWF receives a royalty when you take out your card and ongoing donations every time you use it for purchases — at no extra cost to you. That's extra cash we can use to save endangered species.

You don't need to be a WWF supporter to apply. So send the coupon for your FREE information pack, and call the FREEPHONE number.

0800 77 62 62

Please quote ref: BT 49

The WWF Visa Card is issued by M&A International Bank Ltd, PO Box 1048, FREEPOST, Chester CH4 9ZT.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

How local heroes can cost the Treasury dear

The Government is missing a few billion. It's overlooking an obvious suspect, says David Nicholson-Lord

If Kenneth Clarke and his team from the Treasury want an explanation for Britain's vanishing tax revenues, they could do worse than examine *chaos theory*. This holds that the flexing of a butterfly's wings in China can, eventually, create a storm in New York. The smallest of actions, in other words, can influence the largest of events — general elections for instance.

The disclosure last week that the Government has over-run its borrowing target by about £3bn seriously limits its scope for pre-election tax cuts, prompted another search for suspects — tax-fiddling corporations, the growth of low-income self-employment, the black economy. Yet, of the fastest-growing and most fascinating bit of the new tax-resistant economy, virtually nothing was heard — a strange omission indeed, since it promises in the long run to be of far greater importance, not least to government and its management of national finances.

by the end of 1997) and the humble veggie-box-organic produce brought to your doorstep by a local grower.

But the Nineties have also seen a mushrooming of other self-help initiatives. The number of credit unions — highly localised, co-operative lending institutions — has tripled; they now have around 140,000 members. There are an estimated 400 local exchange trading systems (lets), in which people barter skills and products through cashless currencies. Community businesses and co-operatives have boomed: there are over 1,100, compared with a handful 20 years ago.

Much of this activity has its roots in wider changes in employment and the economy. But to see it as merely part of the growth of self-employment or the black economy is to miss its significance — not least the radical challenge it poses, in the name of a new, informal local economic order, to the global economy.

In environmental terms and energy

use the global economy is highly inefficient. Why bring Granny Smith apples 14,000 miles from New Zealand when we can grow them ourselves? Within the UK, we are eating roughly the same amount of food as 15 years ago — yet it travels 50 per cent further to arrive at its destination. The increase in "food miles" adds to pollution and packaging, means more chemical preservatives are used and puts small producers out of business.

While growing and buying locally makes far more sense, it will not be welcome to the Exchequer, since the cost of creating and cleaning up pollution generated by food miles counts as gross national product or economic "growth", and thus yields tax revenues. Nor do lets command themselves to the Treasury, since no money changes hands and there is no income to tax. The quality of life of those taking part may have improved — many lets participants speak in glowing terms of the neighbourliness

and self-esteem they have rediscovered — but quality of life is not taxable. If one aim of such grassroots initiatives is to generate "social" wealth, another is local economic autonomy. Research is showing just how much money leaks out of local economies into the coffers of big, distant business. An estimated 80 per cent of supermarket takings are lost to the community, suppose this was recycled into local jobs?

Such thinking may herald the emergence of a remodelled pre-industrial economy in which economic power drains away from the nation-state into a network of towns, cities and regions. Such a prospect is still a long way off — but when butterflies flex their wings, the world (chancellors included) had better watch out.

For details of Saturday's conference, "Action on Food Miles — strategies for a local food economy", contact Safe Alliance on 0171 823 5660.

Please rush me my FREE WWF Visa Card information pack

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms): _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Home tel no: (IMPORTANT) _____

Please return to: M&A International Bank Ltd, PO Box 1048, FREEPOST, Chester CH4 9ZT.

Baby Bells plan £15bn merger after US deregulation

DAVID USBORNE

New York

Two telephone Baby Bells, Bell Atlantic and Nynex, yesterday announced plans to combine forces in the biggest telecommunications merger ever seen in America. The deal, which still faces the scrutiny of shareholders and of federal and state-level regulators, would be worth almost \$23bn (£15bn).

making it the second-biggest merger of any kind in US corporate history, after the 1989 takeover of RJR Nabisco by Kohlberg Kravis Roberts for \$21.8bn.

The new company, to be called Bell Atlantic and based in New York, would be the second-largest telecommunications company in the US behind AT&T and the fourth-biggest world-wide. It would have a

global workforce of 133,000 employees and boast combined revenues, based on 1995 figures, of \$21.8bn.

The way for the merger was opened by the passage through the US Congress two months ago of a sweeping telecommunications deregulation bill that lifts many of the barriers to competition between long-distance and local telephone providers and cable companies.

By combining, the companies hope to contend with new competition in their local markets and to break into the lucrative long-distance sector, both in the US and internationally. Together, they cover an area densely populated by business and private customers, from Maine to Virginia and taking in cities such as New York, Washington DC and Philadelphia.

"This is the most natural

partnership in the world," Roland Smith, the chairman of Bell Atlantic, declared at a news conference. "This is a merger of equals in every sense of the word."

Under the deal, Mr Smith, 58, will run the new Bell Atlantic for the first year, after which control will begin to transfer to Ivan Seidenberg, 49, the chairman of Nynex.

The Baby Bells were created

in 1984 when the US government forced the break-up of the old AT&T – or Ma Bell. Until this month, there were seven Bells across the US. With this deal and the \$16.7bn fusion announced two months ago between Telesis Pacific of California and SBC Communications, the number is set to decline to five.

Analysts had widely anticipated yesterday's announce-

ment and by-and-large declared it desirable and even inevitable. The Bell Atlantic deal "is the one that everyone thought made sense," said Scott Cleland of the Washington Research Group.

Navigating the regulatory hurdles may not be simple, however. Federal and state regulators will consider the claims of consumer groups that combined, the two Bells will have

too much power to set rates in

the North-east region. "If there were any two Bell companies that were in a position to go in and compete with one another, because they have known brands across regions, it would be Bell Atlantic and Nynex," Bradley Stillman of the Consumer Federation of America contended.

"Instead, we have two entrenched monopolies joining forces to create one monopoly."

Eurotunnel 'may never repay debts'

PETER RODGERS

Business Editor

Sir Alastair Morton, co-chairman of Eurotunnel, has told banks they must slash the interest rates and fees they charge on the tunnel's £9bn of loans.

Announcing losses last year of £925m, Sir Alastair said yesterday that Eurotunnel had warned the banks that the company may never be able to repay its debts during the entire 57 years left for its concession.

The company said it had told the banks and the two mediators appointed by the French courts that negotiations "should not be based on any assumptions that cash flows over the life of the concession will necessarily be sufficient to repay the banks their principal plus interest, at the levels currently in the credit agreements, plus interest and penalties payable thereon."

Sir Alastair made clear that the comment was aimed principally at persuading the banks to cut their profit margins.

Eurotunnel currently pays its banks a margin of more than 1.6 percentage points above the standard London interbank interest rates on its debts.

Sir Alastair said this margin was appropriate for a project in its construction phase but not for one that is complete and has 57 revenue-earning years ahead. He called this one of the main sticking points with the banks. "Nobody should plan to get project financing rates for the next 57 years" he added.

Eurotunnel, which yesterday replaced SBC Warburg with Kleinwort Benson as its UK broker, also pays substantial fees to its 225 banks. These included £45m in the fourth quarter of last year as a result of the suspension of payment of interest on £1bn of the £9bn debts.

Sir Alastair insisted that there would still be equity left for shareholders once the debt restructuring with the banks was completed.

A shutdown or receivership did neither the banks nor Eu-

rotunnel any good. Refusing to discuss the negotiations with the banks in any detail before the annual meeting in June, he said: "One thing we won't do is swap debt into equity and go away." However, he conceded that debt-for-equity swap could form a part of a more complex package.

Sir Alastair repeated his claims that the Anglo-French nature of the company – two-thirds of whose shares are owned in France – gave special protection under French law to shareholders. He said: "Shareholders have to vote on any solution other than a shutdown and the process of moving towards that vote is overseen on an informal basis by the *man daters ad hoc*."

These are two court appointees, Lord Wakeham, chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, and Robert Badinter, former French Minister of Justice.

To rub home the point against the banks that this is not

an ordinary corporate rescue, Sir Alastair said: "An Anglo-Saxon shutdown and sell-off just does not do them any good in this case."

He believed that when an outline deal was reached with the 26 lead banks – which is unlikely before the autumn – "there is going to be something for the banks and something for the shareholders or there is not going to be a deal – and everybody wants a deal."

Although the shares slipped 4p to 69p yesterday, Sir Alastair insisted that the £925m loss was no surprise, and was foreseeable from the numbers the company had given at the interim results in the autumn.

Last year, after bank fees of £60m and depreciation of £136m Eurotunnel lost £200m before interest. The £925m overall loss was reached after interest charges of £768m, of which £118m is a charge for bank interest unpaid since the standstill on 14 September.

Comment, page 19

National Power rebuffs Atlanta with raised bid

MICHAEL HARRISON

National Power yesterday raised the stakes in its battle to fend off a hostile bid from Southern Company of the US by raising its offer for the regional UK power company Southern Electric by about 10 per cent to £2.5bn.

The increased offer came as a Government announcement on whether to allow through this merger and PowerGen's bid for Midlands Electricity was believed to be imminent.

Ian Lang, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, expected to announce his decision this week, possibly in the next 48 hours, signalling what could be a rash of vertical integration across the electricity industry.

Southern Company refused to add to its statement last week that it was considering a "combination" with National Power but would await the Government's ruling on the two generators' bids before announcing terms.

However, a spokesman in Atlanta, Georgia, said that the statement "still stands". Other sources have suggested that Southern Company may pull out and look elsewhere following National Power's £1.7bn sale of three power stations to Hanson first week and yesterday's raised offer for Southern.

National Power's increased offer for Southern Electric is conditional on the merger being approved on terms and conditions which are satisfactory. It is offering £9.60 a cash share and is allowing Southern Electric shareholders to retain a second interim dividend of 26.3p in effect raising the val-

ue of the offer to £9.863p. The initial bid last October was worth £10.10 a share but since then Southern Electric has sold its stakes in the National Grid and the pumped storage power station First Hydro and undertaken a share consolidation.

On a like-for-like basis, the bid is worth about £11 compared with last October's offer. Shares in National Power rose 13p to 60sp while Southern's stock shot up 3.2p to 891p.

The American camp immediately attacked the revised offer, arguing that it valued Southern on a higher earnings multiple than any of the other regional electricity companies taken over so far.

Analysts estimated that the bid valued Southern Electric at 14 times earnings compared with the 11 times earnings that Southern Company paid for Sweb last year and the 13.6 times that another US utility, Central and South West of Texas, paid for Seabord – the highest bid in the sector so far.

However, National Power hit back arguing that the power station disposal to Hanson and the Southern Electric bid, if successful, would lead to "very significant earnings accretion", giving it scope to raise dividends.

Analysts estimate that the two deals could enhance earnings by between 20 and 30 per cent.

National Power added that neither it nor Southern Electric believed the approach by the US company changed the "compelling logic supporting an immediate implementation of their proposed strategic unification".

Comment, page 19

Economy: Surge to £5.9bn prompts speculation of higher borrowing costs by the autumn

Strong lending fuels rate fears

DIANE COYLE

Economics Editor

The spectre of higher interest rates was raised yesterday by new figures showing fast stronger than expected lending and monetary growth last month. Michael Dicks, an economist at investment bank Lehman Brothers, said: "This is another plank in the argument for interest rates to go up sooner rather than later."

Financial markets expect the cost of borrowing to start rising by the autumn, a timetable that could be embarrassing for the Government.

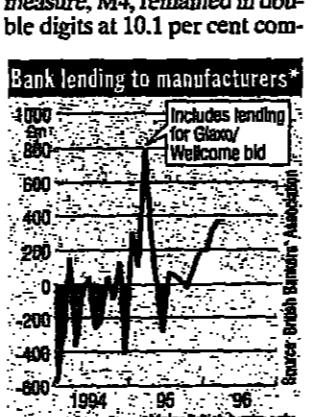
Total lending by banks and building societies amounted to £5.9bn last month, with the big banks reporting a further rise in loans to industry though mortgage lending remained flat.

The British Bankers' Association said borrowing by manufacturing industry at £365m was the highest for a year. There was also record demand

for £1.4bn of funds by leasing companies.

Martin Hall, director general of the Finance and Leasing Association, said this was consistent with members' reports of a strong pick-up in investment demand, particularly for inward investment and infrastructure projects.

Growth of the broad money measure, M4, remained in double digits at 10.1 per cent com-



pared with 10.2 per cent in February. It had been running above the Government's 3-9 per cent target range for the past five months.

Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, warned the Chancellor of the Exchequer last month that rates might have to be raised again if monetary growth did not moderate.

Mr Clarke described the strong growth in M4 as "puzzling".

Economists at the Bank are drafting next month's Inflation Report, which will pass a verdict on whether the Chancellor will meet his inflation target.

February's report concluded that this was "more likely than not" but most subsequent economic statistics have been buoyant.

The CBI's quarterly trends survey, due today, and retail sales figures on Thursday will be scrutinised for further evidence of a pick-up in the economy.

The launch of the gilts repo market on 1 January has in-

creased the money supply and lending figures by several billion pounds a month.

Yet even excluding this effect the underlying rate of broad money growth has nearly doubled in less than a year.

Many economists think this is not a sign of direct inflationary pressure because the takeover boom is behind the surge. For example, about £1.75bn of the March financing for Granada's takeover of Forte.

However, Professor Tim Congdon of Lombard Street research, a member of the Treasury's panel of "wise persons", said: "There are classic signals of monetary excesses."

Institutional investors flush with cash were bidding up shares, land and property prices, he said. Shares prices are at near-record levels, while land rose 29 per cent in value last year and has climbed since then according to estate agents Savills.

Designed to head off a repeat of the Mexican crisis which was only contained by an ad hoc rescue package put together by the US, the IMF and the Basle-based BIS, the working group's proposals are but one part of a big effort by the fund to prevent such near-disasters from occurring – but that if they do, to make sure a mechanism is in place to cope with them.

Despite the gloomy comments, the BSA claimed to be reassured by separate figures showing a sharp jump in new mortgage lending, excluding re-mortgages, to a nine-month high of £1.03bn in March, from £603m in February.

Peter Williams, head of research at the BSA, said: "Strong lending reflected the traditional spring factors, encouraging people to move house now. This is underlined by seasonally adjusted figures which show both net advances and approvals almost unchanged from last month."

months, an upturn in demand was crucial to sustain it beyond the summer.

Despite the gloomy comments, the BSA claimed to be reassured by separate figures showing a sharp jump in new mortgage lending, excluding re-mortgages, to a nine-month high of £1.03bn in March, from £603m in February.

To prevent a repeat of the Mexican debacle which caught markets and governments by surprise, the fund wants members to commit

to publishing improved financial and economic statistics that would permit a potential crisis to be detected in advance.

More than two dozen countries have signed up to the scheme. But if the worst comes to the worst, warns the G10 report, "there should be no presumption that any type of debt will be exempt from payments suspensions or restructuring".

Wrangling, however, is holding up plans to double the IMF's resources to tackle crisis, by enlarging the general arrangements to borrow (GAB) credit line from the existing \$25bn (£16.5bn) to \$50bn. This would be achieved by bringing in new countries alongside the G10 countries which currently contribute to the GAB. But the newcomers, who would operate a parallel "new arrangements to borrow" credit line, are insisting on equal ranking with the founder members. Some of these latter however insist on keeping a special status.

The discussions came 24 hours after top officials of the G7, the inner group of industrial nations, had agreed that the current economic slowdown in Europe, especially in Germany and France, is essentially over.

Addressing the IMF yesterday, Kenneth Clarke, said

stronger growth should resume in continental Europe in the second half of 1996.

Recovery in the housing market stalls

NIC CICUTTI

The stuttering recovery in the housing market appears to be misfiring again with fresh figures showing the number of home purchasers remaining at broadly the same level in March as in the previous two months.

Monthly figures issued yesterday by the Inland Revenue showed 89,000 properties changed hands in March on a seasonally adjusted basis, down from 91,000 in February and 97,000 in January.

The disappointing figures came as a monthly survey by the Building Societies Association, the industry trade body, showed the number of net new com-

mitments by its members was 42,000 last month, down from 43,000 the previous month.

Net commitments are an important indicator of future demand in the housing market, reflecting purchases still six or seven weeks from completion. However, the BSA's figures showed commitments stalled at the same level as 12 months ago.

Separately, a separate survey by big British banks showed a slight drop in loans secured on properties, down from £6.7m in February to £6.3m in March. The total was still up on March 1995, when lending stood at £554m.

Jonathan Loynes, UK economist at HSBC Markets, said:

"[These are] surprisingly weak commitment numbers given recent surveys and anecdotal evidence pointing to a further pick-up in housing market activity. We remain confident mortgage demand will continue to climb in the months ahead. But the rise so far has only made good the ground lost in the first half of 1995."

Further progress is likely to remain patchy as the rise in rates prompts the disappearance of cheaper fixed-rate deals available at the start of this year.

Mr Loynes added that although the market had enough momentum to sustain further price rises in the next few

months, an upturn in demand was crucial to sustain it beyond the summer.

Despite the gloomy comments, the BSA claimed to be reassured by separate figures showing a sharp jump in new mortgage lending, excluding re-mortgages, to a nine-month high of £1.03bn in March, from £603m in February.

Peter Williams, head of research at the BSA, said: "Strong lending reflected the traditional spring factors, encouraging people to move house now. This is underlined by seasonally adjusted figures which show both net advances and approvals almost unchanged from last month."

months, an upturn in demand was crucial to sustain it beyond the summer.

Despite the gloomy comments, the BSA claimed to be reassured by separate figures showing a sharp jump in new mortgage lending, excluding re-mortgages, to a nine-month high of £1.03bn in March, from



COMMENT

Plainly, on any ordinary analysis, the banks ought to own Eurotunnel and the shares should be worth no more than the value of their travel concessions'

Morton plays hard ball on the tunnel he built

Ever since he first became co-chairman of Eurotunnel, Sir Alastair Morton always had his purpose at least that of getting the tunnel built, up and running. The means by which this was achieved were not necessarily important. The paramount thing was simply to get the tunnel in place. There is rarely room for self-doubt and truth in such single-minded pursuit of the grand design. Sir Alastair, it can fairly be said, ignored the underlying reality with impunity, such was his ambition and strength of purpose. From the start the reality was always that the tunnel might get built for the sums being talked of, it might even generate a return for investors and bankers, but most probably it wouldn't. You never heard that from Eurotunnel and its advisers. Their message was always one of unceasing optimism and flamboyant self-assertion.

Well, now the tunnel is built, so Sir Alastair has achieved his great purpose. But with formal admission that debts can never be repaid, what a mess this experiment in private finance has left behind.

With the help of Sir Alastair and French law, which gives investors higher standing as creditors than the rock-bottom position they get in the Anglo-Saxon world, shareholders may salvage the odd plank or two from the wreckage - but only if bankers take pity on them.

Sir Alastair has got the tunnel built, certainly, but he has also demonstrated in the process that infrastructure projects of such

complexity, size and cost cannot be privately financed. Bankers probably always recognise this in confidence at least. Backing Eurotunnel was never a wholly commercial decision in their case. Even Japanese bankers, the group that complains most vocally these days about being misled, were reluctantly persuaded into it by their own ministry of finance as a way of shoring up Japan's wider commercial interest in Britain and the rest of Europe.

For them it was a kamikaze act of duty for the greater good of Japan. To a lesser extent the same was true of British and French banks, who were largely arm-twisted into the moment.

But none of them will easily forgive or forget. Eurotunnel is a one-off. Nothing quite like it will be attempted again. In future such projects will require genuine partnership between state and private sector with the state shouldering a high proportion of the risk, or, as in the case of the high-speed rail link, a big slug of public subsidy.

Hard to believe, but it was less than two years ago that Sir Alastair last persuaded bankers and shareholders to dip their hands into their pockets for Eurotunnel. On that occasion Sir Alastair bullied banks and shareholders into a £1.5bn refinancing. Some of the claims he made when he was trying to pull them into line ought to make him blush now, but probably won't. Even now, Sir Alastair believes he will one day be vindicated - that the tunnel will eventually

pay back every penny invested and some. The irony is that it won't be until long after his death that we will know for sure. For the time being the odds look heavily stacked against him.

Nevertheless, with his talent for bluster, bullying and - where necessary - prevarication, Sir Alastair was clearly the man of the moment.

How many others would have had the check to persuade so many people to empty so much money into a black hole? For the shareholders, angry as they are every right to be, he is still the right man to fight the banks over what is left.

Plainly, on any ordinary analysis, the banks ought to own Eurotunnel and the shares should be worth no more than the value of their travel concessions. But Sir Alastair is playing hard ball, and will probably succeed in keeping at least a small slice of the equity for shareholders.

Time to show or go in Atlanta

It is, as they say in Atlanta, Georgia, fast approaching time to show or go. Will the good ol' boys from Southern Company take the plunge and bid or will the poison pill of National Power's increased offer for Southern Electric prove too much even for American stomachs?

The men from Atlanta have in some ways

boxed themselves in by relying too much on old-fashioned British fair play. They said last week that they would not come up with an offer for National Power until the Government had decided whether to clear the way for an orgy of vertical integration in the electricity industry. John Baker of National Power, who knows a thing or two about how to play his cards in Whitehall, is not allowing himself to be inconvenienced by such formalities as ministerial pronouncements and MMC reports.

While the Americans have sat on their hands, watching ever more incredulously, he has been busy unscrewing the fixtures and fittings with such gusto that Southern may hardly recognise the place even if they do get to move in.

The odd power station or three is missing but, never mind, here's another regional electricity company to go with the one you already own.

Shareholders in National Power could be

forgiven for feeling more than a little bemused. Nor does it help when the potential suitor for your company happens to go under the same name as the one it intends to seek your permission to buy. But perhaps they should content themselves in the knowledge that right now their shares are a one-way bet.

The multiple of earnings National Power

is offering for Southern Electric is right at the top of the range and perhaps it might

have got more out of Hanson for the go-

ing capacity it is buying to add to its own REC, Eastern.

There is plainly a danger that National Power will end up overpaying in its anxiety to escape the clutches of the Americans. But recent history has shown us that it is extraordinarily difficult to pay too much for a regional electricity company.

In any case, if Mr Baker is as good as his word then the two deals it has stitched together in the last six days, allied to declining dividend cover, will do wonders for his ability to reward shareholders. Phrases like "very significant earnings accretion" are not ones that easily pop from the mouths of merchant bankers and lawyers when drafting offer documents.

The alternative prospect is of the Americans throwing silly money at National Power, notwithstanding their efforts to talk the price down in the last week. It is hard to believe that Southern had not already factored in the possibility of a scorched-earth defence from National Power.

After all its advisers, SBC Warburg, know a thing or two about such matters from the Trafalgar-Northern battle where its two former halves acted on opposite sides of enemy lines.

Southern's exorbitant rating, coupled with low US interest rates and the plodding approach Wall Street takes to highly-gearred utilities certainly enable it to top dollar. It is hard to see the Americans having gone this far only to turn away.

Confidence sends unit trust sales to a record

NIC CICUTTI

Sales of unit trusts surged more than 25 per cent to a record £4.1bn in the year to April, boosted by growing confidence among investors in the stock market.

The net increase was aided by exceptional unit trust sales for March, reaching £1bn compared to £566m the previous month. The monthly figures beat the previous record of £975m achieved two years ago.

The figures, issued yesterday by the Association of Unit Trust and Investment Funds, the industry trade body, reflect a return to direct equity-linked investments after the sales lapse in 1994.

Autif's figures came as separate statistics by the Building Societies Association showed an outflow of £279m in March.

Although on a seasonally-

adjusted basis, net receipts reached £116m in March, the figures this year were much lower compared with the same statistics for 12 months ago when net receipts totalled £840m.

Peter Williams, head of research at the BSA, said: "The size of the outflow is likely to represent seasonal factors, as March is the latest date for investments in PEPs in order to fully exploit the tax advantages."

Williams' interest in equity-based investments such as unit trusts may also have increased this and may have influenced the size of the outflow."

However, he pointed out that there was a growing trend for building societies to offer their own unit trust and PEP products. This meant that while money may have shifted out of deposit-style accounts a large slice of funds would still have

remained with the societies under a different guise.

Philip Warland, director general at Autif, said: "Increased awareness of the benefits of unit trusts, together with a resurgence in overall investor confidence and tax year-end deadlines have spurred investors into action."

Mr Warland warned of the possibility of a future month-on-month fall-off in sales. He added: "The pattern of savings flows in the economy is very complex at the moment, with money being retained in building societies because of potential bonuses [from de-mutualisations]."

"Maturing Tessas are also providing a source of new money flows. When that money is released and seeks higher returns, the flows into unit trusts will begin to rise again."

Autif's figures for the 1995/96

tax year mark an end to the shattering reverse unit trust investments and PEPs suffered 12 months previously.

Last month, PEP sales reached £990m, more than double the previous month's total and £149m more than the last all-time record of two years ago.

A substantial slice of PEP sales, £369m, took place in the last few days before the end of the tax year on April 5, compared to £225m in the same period a year earlier.

Three UK sectors, gilt and fixed interest; growth; and growth and income accounted for 60 per cent of the £1bn in sales achieved in March.

Corporate bond PEPs, which were only launched last summer and regarded as a safer form of investment, continued to notch up higher sales reaching £225m in March, up from £165m in February.

NatWest Securities tops rankings

JOHN EISENHAMMER

Financial Editor

NatWest Securities virtually swept the board yesterday at the Reuters rankings for the best City stockbrokers. The investment banking arm of NatWest Group won four of the five awards, maintaining its lead from last year as the best overall broking house in all sectors.

as judged by leading fund managers and the finance directors of major UK business.

NatWest Securities was voted the best broker research, best broker execution, and its oil team as best overall sector team.

SBC Warburg prevented a clean sweep of the top awards by being voted the best broker sales by fund managers and fi-

nance directors. The votes were weighted according to the significance of analysts' sectors and the businesses represented by the fund managers and finance directors.

Having been voted in second place last year by fund managers and finance directors, BZW was the big loser in the 1996 Reuters survey, slipping to the fourth and fifth spots respectively.

HSBC James Capel leapfrogged it to take second place for the best broking research as viewed by the 100 largest UK-based institutional investors, and third place in the same category as voted by finance directors of the 350 largest UK companies.

Merrill Lynch was judged second-best broking research house by finance directors.

Tobacco Dock aims at the moon

NIGEL COPE

Gerald Ratner, former chairman of the Ratner's jewellery group, is set to breathe new life into his moribund Tobacco Dock shopping complex near the Tower of London by adding several family entertainment leisure attractions.

The plan is to add "turbo rides" where viewers watch a film in a seat that moves in tandem with the action, such as cliff rides or a trip to the moon. There are also plans for a virtual reality centre, such as a Sega World.

The development of a nine-screen multiplex cinema has already been announced and should open next year.

Mr Ratner believes leisure attractions should act as a draw to shoppers and encourage retailers to book space.

Some stores groups have started to reserve space at the "factory outlet" centre where well-known brand names sell goods at cut prices.

It is thought that anchor tenants have been signed and shops should start to open on the currently deserted site towards the end of this year, in time for Christmas. "It has taken a long time but this is the final piece in the jigsaw, a source close to Mr Ratner said.

Tobacco Dock has been dogged by problems and in 1992 was bought out of receivership for £12m by Bisley Properties, a private group.

The plans for Tobacco Dock appear to signal an acceptance by Mr Ratner that he is unlikely to succeed in his efforts to buy back the H Samuel jewellery chain from Signet, the renamed

Ratner business that has put its UK division up for sale.

Though Mr Ratner is thought to have found backing, it is expected that he will be outgunned by larger bidders which include Goldsmiths, a rival jewellery chain interested in Ernest Jones chain, and Argos, thought to covet H Samuel.

Though a shortlist has been drawn up and the candidates have received a second tranche of financial information on the companies, Signet declined to be drawn on sale plans when it announced a strong set of trading figures last week.

Apx Partners, a venture capital group, has put together a deal which would involve taking over H Samuel, Ernest

Jones and Goldsmiths and installing Goldsmith's chief executive, Jurek Piascik, as the head of the enlarged group.

However, with trading improving, it is possible that Signet will try to trade its way out of its difficulties rather than sell the businesses, though it would still need a rights issue to reduce its debt mountain.

drawn up and the candidates have received a second tranche of financial information on the companies, Signet declined to be drawn on sale plans when it announced a strong set of trading figures last week.

Apx Partners, a venture capital group, has put together a deal which would involve taking over H Samuel, Ernest

Jones and Goldsmiths and installing Goldsmith's chief executive, Jurek Piascik, as the head of the enlarged group.

However, with trading improving, it is possible that Signet will try to trade its way out of its difficulties rather than sell the businesses, though it would still need a rights issue to reduce its debt mountain.

drawn up and the candidates have received a second tranche of financial information on the companies, Signet declined to be drawn on sale plans when it announced a strong set of trading figures last week.

Apx Partners, a venture capital group, has put together a deal which would involve taking over H Samuel, Ernest

Jones and Goldsmiths and installing Goldsmith's chief executive, Jurek Piascik, as the head of the enlarged group.

However, with trading improving, it is possible that Signet will try to trade its way out of its difficulties rather than sell the businesses, though it would still need a rights issue to reduce its debt mountain.

drawn up and the candidates have received a second tranche of financial information on the companies, Signet declined to be drawn on sale plans when it announced a strong set of trading figures last week.

Apx Partners, a venture capital group, has put together a deal which would involve taking over H Samuel, Ernest

US bank steps up lending war

NIC CICUTTI

The credit card war in the UK escalated yesterday as People's Bank, based in Connecticut in the US, launched a new card offering a 14.4 annual percentage rate.

The People's Bank card, which undercuts traditional high-street issuers by about 7 percentage points, has no annual fee and a 56-day interest-free period.

People's Bank said yesterday that a typical Barclaycard shopper, paying 22.3 per cent APR on a average balance of £1,500 would save about £100 a year by switching cards. Access users, now paying 23.4 per cent APR, would save at least £15 more.

Ronald T. Urigkurt, the UK managing director of People's Bank, said: "For too long now, credit card issuers in the UK have been managing credit to their own advantage, to the extent that some are still charging APRs almost four times

higher than the bank base rate. The average credit card APR rate is 21.2 per cent, which means British shoppers are paying £557m too much interest each year. [Our] card cuts through this complacency."

People's Bank aims to undercut traditional issuers by offering a no-fills service from its

UK headquarters in Northampton. The bank, founded in 1842, is among the top 30 credit-card issuers in the US.

In the past few months, aggressive newcomers have grabbed a share of the market by offering slightly more competitive rates.

Royal Bank of Scotland has added the Advanta card, offering 15.6 per cent APR, linked to base rates. The RBS MasterCard charges 14.5 per cent APR.

Robert Fleming, which has long offered two of the most competitive cards, charges 14 per cent and 11.5 per cent APR respectively, the latter being linked to bank base rates. Despite its rate, the Robert Fleming card only has 200,000 users compared to 9 million Barclaycard customers.

Mark Ward-Norbury, banking services manager at Robert Fleming, said: "There is an enormous amount of inertia in the market. There also appears to be a cartel, with the high

street banks operating on very large margins and making substantial profits. Until one of the major issuers cracks and cuts its rates, the war will only be at the margins."

A Barclaycard spokeswoman said the popularity of its card lay in the added benefits, such as loyalty bonuses ranging from cheap holidays to toasters.

"We are successful because we were first in the market ... Our customers stay with us because they want more from us than a cheap headline rate, which then goes up through a range of hidden charges, including shorter credit terms or additional bills when people don't pay them off on time."

"In many cases, people find that with other users who come from outside the UK and have less experience of this market, the credit limits they receive are lower."

She added that 50 per cent of Barclaycard users paid off their entire debts each month.

More visitors help Euro Disney cut loss

TOM STEVENSON

City Editor

Higher attendances and better hotel occupancy rates helped Euro Disney reduce its first half loss by 30 per cent to

business

ABF shakes off Cinderella image

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Associated British Foods has been the Cinderella of the stock market for so long it is hard to believe that the shares have outperformed the All-Share index by close to a fifth since the start of last year. Even more surprising is that the change in sentiment is as much to do with the sugar and bread giant's undeniably trading performance as its legendary cash pile.

Yesterday's half-year figures confirmed the market's confidence in the group, still controlled by 69-year old chairman and chief executive Gary Weston. Pre-tax profits up 14 per cent at £198m in the six months to 2 March were well ahead of expectations and the shares responded accordingly with a 5% rise to 420p.

British Sugar, acquired from Berisford for £880m in 1990, continues to demonstrate what a good buy it was. Profits rose by close to 4 per cent to £87m in the latest period, despite a comparable period flattened by around £5m due to the release of additional exports previously blocked under quota regulations. ABF's Silver Spoon brand has prospered under the heavy regulation of the industry. Thirteen devaluations of the EU's green pound in 11 months has done wonders for prices, although the latest rise in January has had the effect of pulling orders into the first half. ABF is warning the second half will not benefit to the same extent, but continuing demand for sticky drinks, confectionery and starch should underpin future growth prospects.

Milling and baking around a quarter of Britain's flour and bread has traditionally been ABF's Achilles' heel, given the cut-throat price war waged by the supermarket chains over the past few years. But even here there are signs that the business is holding its ground after the slow recovery that started last year. The bread price rise a year ago, the first for some time, plus a move to upmarket brands such as Kingsmill and Alison helped Allied Bakeries lift its margins and profits. Henderson Crosthwaite says the business swam against the tide of falling margins last year and at less than 5 per cent there remains further scope for recovery.

Retailing, helped by recovery in the Primark discount clothes retailer in Ireland, showed the strongest growth in the first half, raising profits 55 per cent to £34m. The jury remains out on whether ABF will spend its £454m cash pile wisely. Most of the £3m profits contribution from North America in the latest period came from Kraft Foods' specialty oils and fats business acquired for £97m last year. Even taking account of £3m restructuring costs, that return on capital is hardly exciting. Meanwhile, there must be a question whether the three Weston sons in the business, one of whom appears to

be earmarked to succeed Gary, can fill their father's shoes. Even with Farnell's upgraded profits forecast of £420m for the year, the shares look fully valued on a forward p/e of 14.

Farnell aims for the top

Coming so soon after the acquisition of Premier there were no surprises in yesterday's full-year figures from Farnell, the world's third-largest electronic component distributor. The 22 per cent rise in pre-tax profit to £75.5m was ahead of forecasts made during the bid but attention was firmly focused on chief executive Howard Poulsen's assessment of the integration of Premier.

With such a large deal - the £1.8bn acquisition dwarfed Farnell's existing business and sets the company up nicely for inclusion in the FT-SE100 - the success of that assimilation is crucial. If the claimed benefits of the deal come through the newly renamed Premier Farnell will be one of the most exciting growth stories in the stock market's top flight. If not, the Jeremiah's will be lining up to say we told you so.

The news yesterday was as encour-

aging as anyone might have hoped at this early stage. On the important measure of service reliability, Farnell believes the former Premier businesses achieve their promised delivery times 85 per cent of the time compared with 70 per cent before the takeover. And with a way to go to match Farnell's 100 per cent success rate, the pessimists who claimed there was nothing to gain from the deal because Premier was already well run look wide of the mark.

The other good news to emerge from City briefings yesterday was an acceleration of the planned introduction of Farnell's catalogue into the US and Premier's Newark product over here. Analysts' forecasts for the year to next January have assumed no contribution from this source so could overshoot by a substantial margin if volumes start to motor in the second half.

Those estimates were usefully underpinned by last year's result, which benefited from a 17 per cent jump in sales to £527m. Earnings per share of 37.5p were 21 per cent higher and the dividend payout, which has doubled in five years, rose 20 per cent to 10.8p (9p). Sales growth in the low-volume, high-margin components business continued with increasing margins at home making up for the costs of starting up in the Far East. The high-vol-

ume commodity operation is coping well with tougher trading conditions. If Premier Farnell matches NatWest Securities' forecast of £160m this year and £223.5m next time, the shares up 3p to 720p, stand on a price/earnings ratio of 20, falling to 16. That is a premium to the market, but deservedly so and, at a big discount to Electrocomponents, its supposedly risk-free rival, the shares are still good value.

Ronson builds on male brands

Howard Hodgson, the flamboyant former funeral director with a passion for Aston Villa, is not wasting any time in his transformation of the Ronson lighter and accessories group.

It is only three years since Hodgson alighted upon the company, then called Hosking Brewery. Since then he has changed the name twice, first to Halkin Holdings and then to Ronson. Peripheral businesses such as the brewery have been sold while Ronson is re-invented as a kind of mid-market Dunhill.

The plan is to use the strength of the brand name - which is principally known for lighters and other smoking bits and pieces - and build a male branded accessories group that will eventually encompass a clothing range, sunglasses, leather goods and other accessories aimed at 18-35-year-old men.

The Hodgson plan was developing nicely before a fire in January destroyed the company's main warehouse and manufacturing plant in Newcastle. The fire broke out after the company's December year-end so did not affect last year's profits which surged by nearly 50 per cent to £34m. But the impact will be felt in the first half of this year. Sales are expected to be down by £2m to £3m. Margins have been affected as the company has had to source products at higher prices in order to fulfil orders and keep customers. Negotiations with the insurance company are continuing with £2.7m received so far and another £3.5m still to come.

All this will mean that profits and earnings will be flat this year, though a return to growth is predicted for 1997.

Shares had fallen sharply since the fire in January, though they have recovered some ground since. The strategy remains unchanged but the fire creates some uncertainty this year, such as the details of the remaining insurance payment.

With house broker Williams de Broe expecting profits of £4m this year and the shares up 3p to 34p, they are trading on a lowly forward rating of 8. Cheap on the face of it, but not without risk given the company's small size and the difficulties in re-grouping after the loss of the factory.

Accountant laps up new role as Wonder Woman

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

BY JOHN WILLCOCK

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

DESIGN BY GUY STANNETT

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY STANNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY GUY STANNETT

t laps up new
under Woman

| DATA BANK | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| FT-SE 100 | 3852.7 -4.4 |
| FT-SE 250 | 4544.1 +9.6 |
| FT-SE 350 | 1944.6 -0.8 |
| SEAQ VOLUME | 698.2m shares |
| Glits Index | 43,234 bargains |
| 92.74 - +0.19 | |
| SHARE SPOTLIGHT | |
| Midlands Electricity | Share price, pence |
| 420 | |
| 400 | |
| 380 | |
| 360 | |
| 340 | |
| 320 | |
| 300 | |
| OND J F M A | Share datum |

Takeover speculation keeps the atmosphere electric



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN
Stock market reporter
of the year

Takeover action, real and rumoured, sent yet another surge of excitement through electricity shares. National Power's £2.5bn offer for Southern Electric was the only deal to materialise but it was enough to spark speculation that others will soon appear.

London Electricity and Midlands Electricity were singled out for special attention. The rumour mill was on form a 920p-a-share offer should arrive for London today at its Holborn office from Houston, US group. The identity of Midlands' alleged bidder was more elusive but a host of American and Continental names were bandied around. London gained 38p to 855p; Midland 24p to 417p.

NP's agreed offer for Southern, which still needs Whitehall clearance, sent the distributor's shares racing ahead 32p to 891p. It also lifted NP 13p to 605p, reflecting the stock market's conviction that the American Southern Co's predatory ambitions would not be thwarted by the takeover bid for the UK group. The Scottish power groups, Scottish Hydro-Electric, up 12.5p to 367.5p, and Scottish Power, 13.5p higher at 400.5p, were drawn into the excitement and Yorkshire Electricity, for so long the sector's favourite bid candidate, rose 13p to 874p.

The electrical excitement spilled over to waters with Thames, another potential bidder for London, up 8p to 584p and Anglian 10p to 614p. United Utilities, combining the North West's electricity and water companies, gained 14p to 627p. After a shaky start its shares have been firm and there is a growing conviction among utility watchers that electricity-water combinations could be a strong defence against overseas marauders. UI, it is thought, plans to buy

into the US gas industry. Cambridge Water, a second-liner which last month was still a statutory company, had another lively session, up 38p to 315p; the non-voting shares rose 33p to 290p.

If it had not been for the utilities the market would have died of boredom. Trading was mainly featureless, with the FT-SE 100 index briefly touching a new high but closing 4.4 points down at 3,852.7. One food bid did materialise, a 110p-a-share offer for Everest Foods from Canadian chip maker, McCain. Everest jumped 30p to 109p.

Imperial Chemical Industries edged ahead 5p to 928p despite some unease about Thursday's first-quarter fig-

ures. Forecasts are in the £200m to £215m range against £221m last time. Year's estimates are cut by around £20m to £203m.

Comments on accounting policies lowered Carlton Communications, 11.5p to 458p, and Glaxo Wellcome, 9p to 801p. Increased losses left Enron 4.5p down at 69p.

Lasmo, the oil group, achieved the distinction of becoming the first to enjoy a higher turnover on Tradepoint than on Seaq. The order-driven Tradepoint deals were recorded as £5 million while Seaq accounted for £1 million. The price, however, was unchanged at 18.5p.

Builders produced a few gains with talk that corporate action lurks in the sector. Costain, where Arab interests have substantial stakes, added 4p to 101p; Redrow 5p to 150p and Tay Homes 5p to 144p.

Wainhomes gained 2p to 101p. In January, when Wainhomes' shares were depressed as police investigated alleged accounting problems, the rival Bellway housebuilding group, picked up nearly 5 per cent.

In an intriguing deal Wain-

homes has purchased for £24.45m, payable over 10 years, 21 building sites from English China Clays. Developments have already started on some of the sites and others are planning permission. The deal, which expands Wainhomes' territorial spread, puts a value of around £1,000,000 on a housing plot against an industry average near £1,000.

Micro Focus dried 12.5p to 1.143p as the rumoured bid failed to materialise and Filtronic, making parts for mobile telephones, jumped 38p to 433p on Pannier Gordon support. Manganese Bronze, the London taxi cab maker, moved ahead 10p to 307p.

□ Middlesex, the metals group with interests in the former Soviet Union, was the day's most busily traded share.

Figures are due soon and it is widely believed the group will announce its move from the doomed USM to the full market. There is also talk of further expansion moves. The shares held at 8.25p.

□ Cafe Inns, running pubs in the North West, jumped 15p to a 170p peak. It is benefiting from its swing from tenanted to managed pubs. The company now has 14 managed houses and 70 run by tenants. Cafe Inns hopes to raise £2m to help increase its managed estate. It has mangled a joint venture with the Burtonwood Brewery, collecting two managed pubs and £1.4m in the process. In January its shares were below 100p.

| Share Price Data | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share once divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. | | | | | | | | | |
| Other details: x Ex rights; x Dividend; x All or Unlisted Securities Market; x Suspended; pp Parity Pd pm Nt Paid Shares. | | | | | | | | | |
| Source: Firstcall | | | | | | | | | |
| The Independent Index | | | | | | | | | |
| The notes allow you to access real-time share prices by phone from Shareline. Simply dial 0891 223 303, followed by the eight code or need more than one share? To access the latest share price, dial 0891 223 303 followed by one of the two-digit codes below. | | | | | | | | | |
| FTSE 100: Real-time 00 Sterling Share 04 Privatisation issues 36 | | | | | | | | | |
| UK Stock Market Report 01 Water Shares 39 | | | | | | | | | |
| UK Company News 02 Wet St Report 20 Electricity Shares 40 | | | | | | | | | |
| Foreign Exchange 03 Tokyo Market 21 High Street Banks 41 | | | | | | | | | |
| Anyone with a tone-call telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of The Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0891 223 333. Calls cost 33p per minute (cheap rate), and 49p at all other times. Call charges include VAT. | | | | | | | | | |
| For assistance, call our helpline 0771 873 4376 (930am - 530pm). | | | | | | | | | |
| Calls cost 33p per minute (cheap rate), and 49p at all other times. Call charges include VAT. | | | | | | | | | |
| Market leaders: Top 20 volumes | | | | | | | | | |
| Stock | Vol'000 | Stock | Vol'000 | Stock | Vol'000 | Stock | Vol'000 | Stock | Vol'000 |
| Haven | 100000 | Ladbrooke | 77000 | BT | 40000 | Abercrombie | 40000 | British Gas | 500000 |
| British Gas | 500000 | City 100 | 75000 | Marks & Spencer | 450000 | Barclays | 500000 | Gascoyne | 400000 |
| ASDA Group | 94000 | National Grid | 60000 | Sears | 500000 | Glaxo Wellcome | 450000 | Redrow | 500000 |
| National Power | 50000 | BT Group | 50000 | BAF Inds. | 40000 | BAF Inds. | 40000 | Scottish Power | 440000 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| FT-SE 100 Index hour by hour | | | | | | | | | |
| Open 3852.41 down 3.56 | | 11.00 3852.05 down 3.56 | | 14.00 3853.58 down 3.56 | | 15.00 3855.00 down 12 | | 16.00 3855.00 down 12 | |
| Open 3852.41 down 3.56 | | 12.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 12.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 12.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 12.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | |
| Open 3852.41 down 3.56 | | 13.00 3852.05 down 3.56 | | 13.00 3852.05 down 3.56 | | 13.00 3852.05 down 3.56 | | 13.00 3852.05 down 3.56 | |
| Open 3852.41 down 3.56 | | 14.00 3852.05 down 3.56 | | 14.00 3852.05 down 3.56 | | 14.00 3852.05 down 3.56 | | 14.00 3852.05 down 3.56 | |
| Oil Exploration | | | | | | | | | |
| Stock | Vol'000 | Stock | Vol'000 | Stock | Vol'000 | Stock | Vol'000 | Stock | Vol'000 |
| BP | 3852.41 down 3.56 | | 11.00 3852.05 down 3.56 | | 12.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 13.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 14.00 3852.05 down 2.1 |
| BP | 3852.41 down 3.56 | | 12.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 12.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 12.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 12.00 3852.05 down 2.1 |
| BP | 3852.41 down 3.56 | | 13.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 13.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 13.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 13.00 3852.05 down 2.1 |
| BP | 3852.41 down 3.56 | | 14.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 14.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 14.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 14.00 3852.05 down 2.1 |
| Oil & Gas | | | | | | | | | |
| Stock | Vol'000 | Stock | Vol'000 | Stock | Vol'000 | Stock | Vol'000 | Stock | Vol'000 |
| BP | 3852.41 down 3.56 | | 11.00 3852.05 down 3.56 | | 12.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 13.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 14.00 3852.05 down 2.1 |
| BP | 3852.41 down 3.56 | | 12.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 12.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 12.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 12.00 3852.05 down 2.1 |
| BP | 3852.41 down 3.56 | | 13.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 13.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 13.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 13.00 3852.05 down 2.1 |
| BP | 3852.41 down 3.56 | | 14.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 14.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 14.00 3852.05 down 2.1 | | 14.00 3852.05 down 2.1 |
| Other Financial | | | | | | | | | |
| Stock | Vol'000 | Stock | Vol'000 | Stock | Vol'000 | Stock | Vol'000 | Stock | Vol'000 |
| ABN Amro | 100000 | Barclays | 100000 | HSBC | 100000 | ICI | 100000 | ICI | 100000 |
| Amoco | 100000 | BNP Paribas | 100000 | Deutsche Bank | 100000 | Imperial Chemicals | 100000 | Imperial Chemicals | 100000 |
| Barclays | 100000 | Citicorp | 100000 | Citicorp | 100000 | ICI | 100000 | ICI | 100 |

I did not believe any referee, at any level of the game, could properly be held responsible for a series of collapsed scrums

From what I have read, it seems the Rugby Football Union was unworried by the prospect of a win in the law courts for the young, paralysed former player against the referee. The RFU thought it would not – could not – happen. Not for the first time, that body has been proved wrong.

On this occasion, however, my sympathies are entirely with the men in blazers. I did not think it would happen either: not because rugby possessed any immunity from the workings of the law, but because I did not believe any referee, at any level of the game, could properly be held responsible for a series of collapsed scrums.

Unless Mr Justice Curtis's decision is reversed on appeal, or unless the law as laid down by the learned judge is changed by Parliament, the

consequences for the game are of the utmost seriousness. It is all very well for Brian Campbell and other leading referees to advise: "Carry on refing." No doubt their intentions are good, but they are no protection against legal action.

True, the judge said his decision applied only on the facts of the case. These, as far as he was concerned, were principally that this was a youth fixture and that the referee had not even tried to enforce the crouch-touch-pause-engage procedure recommended by the RFU.

But this is not even part of the rules of the game. I am, I should explain, deliberately using "rules" rather than "laws" to avoid any confusion between the laws of rugby and the law of the land. The latter I shall now explain.

Sado-masochistic activities certainly do not count as what the lawyers also call "manly sports". These form the great exception to the law of consent being no defence. They include boxing, obviously, rugby as almost obviously, football and perhaps also cricket these days.

But there is one crucial qualification. The violence to which the par-



ALAN WATKINS
on rugby

icipant consents must be inflicted within the rules of the game. This is so irrespective of whether we are talking about civil or criminal law.

Thus punching an opponent is outside the rules of rugby, as the perhaps unfortunate Simon Dev-

ereux of Gloucester has discovered. Some people think that a few swift uppercuts are part of the game's rich tapestry. But the law takes a different view. Not only can the puncher be prosecuted and fined or imprisoned like Devereux, but the punched can also take him to a civil court and demand damages.

So far, so straightforward. The developments of recent years are that the police have been more ready to prosecute, and injured players more willing to chance their arm in the civil courts.

The Ben Smoldon case, however, carries matters a good deal further. It does so in two respects. First, it was the referee, and not a player, who was held liable. And, secondly, no clear breach of the rules was established on the part of any

the put-in. The attacking side then kicks the penalty. I cannot understand the referee's decision. For what front row would deliberately collapse a scrum in those circumstances – which are quite different from collapsing one to avoid a pushover try?

I would, however, alter the rules to give the side with the put-in an indirect free-kick after the first collapsed scrum. This would avoid a series of them. I would also keep Her Majesty's judges well away from a subject which is too difficult for them. In the meantime, not only referees but also players will have to take out costly insurance. The only people who can be satisfied are our insurance companies – and, of course, the gentlemen in wigs who never lose a single game.

Surrey aiming to bridge the great divide

David Llewellyn talks to the men who are determined to ensure success returns to their cricket club through hard work, discipline and a hunger to win

Surrey are emerging from a winter of discontent with a spring in their step.

Changes of chairman and chief executive, plus the appointment of a highly regarded cricket manager have helped push into the background recent financial and administrative problems and an incomprehensible lack of playing success for more than a decade.

The task of this triumvirate is to rebuild a once great club and get it back to winning ways. Even without the imports, the talent is there.

They have begun with a significant demolition. Surrey's own Great Divide – a wall splitting the capped players' dressing-room from that of the uncapped men – has gone.

As symbolism goes, it was fairly graphic. And although he does not want to take credit for it, Dave Gilbert, Surrey's cricket manager cum head coach, was the architect of the move. "To me it just made common sense," the former Australian Test player, who took up his new post in February after spending three years as Queensland's assistant manager, says. "We are all in it together and to discriminate by doing that off the field I felt was extremely damaging and it was hell of a contradiction to expect everyone to mould together on the field."

He canvassed the senior players, who backed him to the hilt and Surrey had taken the first tottering step on what everyone hopes will be the road to success.

Gilbert's enthusiasm is matched by that of the new chairman, Mike Soper, a straight-talking businessman and the incoming chief executive. Paul Sheldon, an orderly man.

"I want us to build a team within three years capable of winning all forms of competition."

Received loss of almost £600,000.

The membership has been restless for some time. Too often over the last 10 years they have seen a side studded with gifted players grind to a shuddering halt in the chase for honours. Their last triumph came in 1982, when they won the NatWest Trophy; the last time they lifted the County Championship was in 1971, before many of the present side were born.

There has been frequent criticism that the committee were more concerned in the past with Surrey's status as a Test match ground and that those five days in August were the focus of the whole season, but Sheldon is determined to change that perspective.

"Primarily we are Surrey County Cricket Club," he insists. "But Surrey the Test match ground and Surrey CCC are interrelated. One cannot

exist without the other. And every time we have built another tier on the pavilion, we [the committee] have moved further away from the members. I want to change that."

So rather than allow his committee members to withdraw to some lofty ivory tower at the historic ground, Soper is planning to create a members' liaison group to maintain links with what he and Sheldon recognise is the lifeblood of the club. "I enjoy talking proper cricket to the members," Soper says. "Not cricket that happened 35 or 40 years ago. I like to talk about how the second XI are doing. Modern-day cricket, I am a club cricketer."

On the field, there is no doubt about how things will go.

Gilbert has a straightforward philosophy. "We play sport for fun, for enjoyment, for recreation," he says. "Of course, once it becomes your livelihood, in some respects it becomes a serious business, but even then if you cannot have that fun aspect, I think you might as well give it up."

But he is a hard man, and coupled with that fun aspect is perhaps the core of antipodean success over the years. "The formula for success is hard work, discipline and a hunger to win," Gilbert explains. "I've been absolutely delighted with the way the players here have responded. There have been some tough pre-season sessions, but even then once I heard someone complain."

He is not foolish enough, nor are Sheldon and Soper, to promise trophies this season, but Gilbert has a two-year contract and he says: "I'd like to make an impact in that time. I am very ambitious to go places and obviously I see my long-term future in Australian cricket, but while I am here I will give it everything I have. I'd love nothing more than to be part of the Surrey set-up that knocks off the Aussies when they come over here next year. That would be fantastic."

Barriers are coming down at The Oval, and all that is left now is the hurdle of harnessing the talent and turning Surrey into a winning club.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Billy Boston

Wigan, the fat cats of Rugby League, have rarely shied away from backing their judgement with hard cash, and their signing of Billy Boston in 1953 was typically sensational. So highly did they rate the Cardiff-born winger, the scorer of a staggering 126 tries in one season for Royal Signals, that they happily paid the 18-year-old phenomenon £3,000 to sign up.

"It was a lot of money," Boston says today. "To put it in perspective, I remember going to the Challenge Cup final one year when the losers got £7... less tax."

Boston played in six finals, winning three, in a 17-year career, during which his 573 tries put him second only to Brian Bevan in the all-time scorers' list. "We had a good side, although nothing like as successful as the present one. We only trained twice a week and had jobs too."

The son of a West African seaman, Boston was a postal worker for most of his career. He then spent 14 years with an insulation firm before taking over a hotel, The

McColgan learns a lesson for Atlanta

Liz McColgan believes a lesson learned from her London Marathon win will increase her chances of winning the Olympic title in Atlanta.

She admitted yesterday that allowing a breakaway group to build up a substantial lead in the first half of Sunday's race could have cost her victory.

McColgan plans three races before the Olympics – possibly starting with a road race in early June and including one over her old distance of 10,000 metres on the track.

The 31-year-old Scot, who put

an injury-ravaged career back on course in the capital, has no plans for a pre-Games visit to Atlanta. "I know it will be hot, humid and hilly – and not particularly fast. But when I run a marathon course I'm so focused it could be anywhere in the world. Because of the type of runner I am, I turn off everything. All I see is a blue line on the road."

McColgan admitted that her first race on the Mall was directed at those who had written her career off. "So many people had doubted me that my feeling was 'I showed you'." My second thought was how good I felt – light and bouncy. It was amazing. That's why I am so confident for the Olympics."

David Bedford, who puts together London's elite field, will try to entice McColgan and three-times men's winner Dionicio Ceron back next year, even though any Olympic success

Mike Rowbottom assesses the Olympic implications of the London Marathon

would send their appearance fees soaring. Meanwhile, the London Marathon and the British Athletics Federation will each put £25,000 into a fund aimed at promoting distance running in the United Kingdom. Contributions from national sports funds will bring the total to £100,000.

Britain's marathon selectors will meet within the next fortnight to name two other women who will join McColgan in Atlanta. But who will join the pre-selected Richard Nerurkar and Peter Whitehead as Britain's third man remains tantalisingly open.

"If Paul does the Olympic marathon, he will be wanting to get into the top three," Bicourt said. "What we have to consider is what realistic chance he has of doing that, because who remembers who is fifth, sixth, seventh or eighth in the Olympic marathon? The Olympics makes millions, but it doesn't give anything to the athletes. Paul has got a family and a life to lead."

At 35 Evans has spent years

reaching his present commercial value, and he does not have that

many earning years ahead of him. His is a perfectly reasonable position – but he needs to let the British Athletic Federation know of his intentions soon enough for them to alert other runners if need be.

Despite his top-10 finish in what was only his second marathon, Gary Staines, who suffers from asthma, is wary of committing himself to a marathon in the Atlanta heat and humidity.

With the next British finisher on Sunday, Mark Hudspith, back in 18th place on 2:19:25, the way may yet be open for Steve Brace to claim the third spot. His 2:10 run in Houston before Christmas put him firmly into the selectors' minds – but he may, ironically, have lessened his chances by running the Belgrade marathon on Saturday, where he finished eighth in the relatively disappointing time of 2:15:47.

Whether Belgium's Vincent

Rousseau will change his mind

about boycotting Atlanta because of the heat remains to be seen, but it was greatly to his credit that he finished second on Sunday in conditions which he famously hates.

Rousseau's decision to step off the start line at Rotterdam last year as temperatures rose to 70°F was clearly fresh in Bedford's mind before the event got underway. "I stayed out of Vincent's way just in case he was trying to find me," Bedford said with a grin.



Evans: Olympic option

Retire
price f

Hammon
exan football

ain leave



Cut and run: Graham Thorpe forces away on the off side during his innings of 141 not out at Chelmsford yesterday

Photograph: Peter Jay

Thorpe's sights on 21st century

DEREK PRINGLE

reports from Chelmsford

England A 317 and 60-2

The Rest 123 and 253

England A win by 8 wickets

As expected England A won this match with style and some ease.

Indeed only a fine century by Graham Thorpe, the 20th of his career, forced Nasser Hussain's side to return for their second innings as chill winds and showers reminded those present that despite Thorpe's sure and balm offering, it was still April.

The match confirmed little, except that on his day Graham

Thorpe is England's finest batsman. But then his reappointed England captain, Michael Atherton, knew that, so why was the Surrey man asked to play with the hopefuls against the impressive ly drilled England A?

One reason could be that Raymond Illingworth feels Thorpe is too complacent with what he achieves, particularly at Test level where he averages 40.93 from 26 Tests. It is an average high enough to denote class, but with only two centuries, Thorpe will have to convert more of his 70s into hundreds to achieve the greatness that is within his grasp.

It is a failing he is well aware of, despite being the only bats-

man to have returned from the World Cup with his reputation intact after a lean tour of South Africa, where his one-day form exceeded that in Tests.

"There is no doubt that Test cricket is the ultimate," he said, during a long break for rain. "But I don't see any point in harping on about disappointments. I don't think I've got any glaring errors in technique. Perhaps we should give some credit to the bowlers occasionally."

Thorpe differs from most English batsmen in his ability to pull to the boundary deliveries that most batsmen seem happy to tuck in behind and play down for one. It is an ability that requires phenomenal speed of

eye and hand, and a gift that appears to be bestowed solely on left-handers, like Brian Lara and David Gower.

It certainly makes them harder to bowled at, and Thorpe punished all the seamers. He hit the normally unflappable Munton for successive fours, a sublime cover drive on the up preceding a rasping pull as the bewildered bowler shortened his length. Mind you, Munton took the final bow, when he piped Thorpe to the man of the match award. With a fifty and seven wickets to his name, only a Surrey man would have argued.

Ed Giddins also took seven wickets in the match as England A seamers made the ball seam

more often by hitting the pitch harder than the opposition – possibly the product of a winter spent toiling away on the grassless surfaces of Pakistan.

To illustrate this dominance, The Rest managed three sets of fours, including one by the tall left-arter Paul Hutchison. If it was a chattering first-class debut for the 18-year-old Yorkshireman, he at least had the satisfaction of knocking back Hussain's off-stump with a cork that left him off the pitch.

When his muscles firm up and he learns to swing it further, he will trouble the best. For the sake of English cricket let us hope some of his team-mates do the same this summer.

Campbell boosts West Indian optimism

TONY COZIER

reports from Bridgetown, Barbados

The West Indies are only a few hours away from the emphatic victory in the first Test they need as an instant tonic to their self-confidence that has taken such a recent battering.

New Zealand, young, inexperienced and weakened by injuries to key players, resume this morning needing 126 to avert an innings defeat with six wickets

remaining against an attack refreshed after the rest day.

Their despair is compounded by the groin injury that has reduced their first-innings top scorer, Adam Parore, to a hobble and will oblige him to use a runner. It has also put him out of the second, and final, Test starting in Antigua on Saturday.

Even with the win that should be theirs, their captain Courtney Walsh and coach Clive Lloyd, in their first Test together, are realistic enough to put the situation into its proper perspective.

Apart from Parore's injury,

all-rounders Chris Cairns and fast bowler Dion Nash were not able to play at all, rendering an already limited New Zealand team as weak as any in international cricket. Even so the West Indies had to perform on the field. Kenya and others who have embarrassed them in the past year were even weaker than the New Zealanders.

The assertive triumph that seems assured comes as a relief. The West Indies can take heart from the maturity of their two

youngest batsmen, Sherwin Campbell, 25, and Shivnarine Chanderpaul, 21, set up their comfortable first-innings lead after Brian Lara's early dismissal had increased the pressure.

Messed around by selectors, both came into the Test with their places still not entirely settled. They will be now. Campbell's magnificent 208, his first in Tests let alone double hundred, was the innings of a true opening batsman. The particular demands of one-day cricket had unsettled him and

cost him his place during the World Cup.

SPORT

Sky TV deal could get RFU off the hook

Rugby Union

STEVE BALE

The internecine and international strife that is tearing English and British rugby asunder may be resolved by a rescue made by an unlikely saviour: BSkyB, whose vast offer for the broadcasting rights to English rugby sent the Rugby Football Union in its independent direction in the first place.

Today the RFU intends, almost as an act of despair, to

state its case for separate English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish television deals when the present contract with the BBC expires next year. The other home unions are so unconvinced by what they see as the patronising English attitude that they are threatening to eject England from the Five Nations' Championship and make next year's Lions tour of South Africa without them but possibly with the French.

These are no idle threats, as the Irish attitude, enunciated by

Syd Millar, president of the IRFU, shows: "We're not beating about the bush on this one. We can't afford not to have our share." These ostensibly mild remarks should be taken in the context that Ireland have, for a quarter of a century, been England's closest rugby allies.

The RFU has effectively put its internal dispute with its leading clubs over the control and financing of professional rugby in England on hold while it deals with the television question. No

meetings with English Profes-

sional Rugby Union Clubs are planned, and in the meantime Epruc, which has already announced a cup and league boycott, is getting on with planning its autonomous 1996-97 season.

But if the RFU was able to finalise an agreement for the reported £150m-plus with Sky – which would inevitably involve the sharing of live coverage of Twickenham internationals with a terrestrial station – it could then pass enough funds the way of the clubs comfortably to cover the costs of profession-

alism and provoke a retreat from the present entrenched positions. The only losers would, of course, be the punters.

The next part is even trickier, but if Sky – as is now being suggested – agree big-money individual contracts with each of the other home unions, then everyone is suddenly off the hook. Short of a straight RFU back-down, there does not appear to be any other obvious solution to either of its disputes.

While the RFU's "foot is off

the pedal", as one club official

put it, Epruc claims its plans are virtually complete. The RFU's assertion, that no broadcaster will speak to anyone but it, is patent nonsense and, unless the logic of the Sky scenario is followed, at some as-yet indeterminate stage Epruc will simply declare its independence.

"We are going to go on with our strategy and when that starts to come to fruition there will be a remarkable sense of urgency on the part of the union," Donald Kerr, the Epruc chairman, said yesterday. "We

have fixture lists worked out in detail for all our competitions and, after a bit of fine-tuning, we will be happy to publish these."

As things stand, no meetings between the clubs and the union are planned. Yet various of the antagonists – Peter Wheeler and Kerr of the clubs, and Cliff Brittle, Bill Bishop and Tony Hall of the RFU – sat within a dozen feet of each other at Sunday's Sano Cup match at Twickenham. Hallett and Wheeler in adjacent seats, Brittle, the RFU chairman, has agreed to meet

representatives of the 'Rugby Union Players' Association tomorrow. Rupa has also requested a meeting with Kerr.

Meanwhile, the third of the RFU's disputes – with Bath and Wigan over the restriction in Twickenham's capacity for the inter-code match on 25 May – is no nearer settlement. Yesterday's scheduled meeting between the police, the clubs and the union failed to materialise and it is now due to be held tomorrow.

Alan Watkins, page 24

Gascoigne votes for Venables

Football

GLENN MOORE

"About Paul Gascoigne..." started the inquest. "Oh no," interjected Terry Venables. "What's he done now?"

Gascoigne had, in fact, added his distinctive accent to the chorus of voices begging the England coach to reconsider his resignation. The request left Venables both exasperated and touched in public, and probably quietly pleased in private.

"I was gutted when I heard he was going to resign," Gascoigne had said, resorting, under encouragement, to tabloid-speak. "It will be a tragedy for English football if he goes."

Gascoigne was speaking after another imaginative Venables coaching session at Bisham Abbey, where England are preparing for tomorrow night's friendly with Croatia.

It would, of course, be a much bigger story if Gascoigne had said: "It was great relief when he resigned. I just wish he had gone immediately." Having been signed by Venables as a 21-year-old, and nurtured – to the point of favouritism – during Venables' stewardship of England, Gascoigne is hardly an independent witness.

He is, however, a man with little time for double-speak and political games. What you see is what you get and, when Gascoigne says it would "give the squad a significant lift" if Venables could be persuaded to stay, you are inclined to believe him.

"The public are behind him, the players are, even the media

seem to be behind him. What he needs now is the full backing of the Football Association. I hope they can come to terms with him. I don't know why they aren't behind him. If we don't snap him up someone will."

"The players have great respect for him. I've had a few managers, I've been abroad. He's different class. He has different ideas, he knows what he's talking about and knows how football should be played."

"When he is talking all the lads are concentrating and listening, even Bryan Robson, even Don Howe, with his experience. When the gaffer speaks at meetings and he says, 'Anything to say, Don?', Don says 'you've said it all', which is a compliment from Don to the gaffer."

"He is bringing in 17-year-olds to join in training – we never had that chance. They are going to feel on top of the world when they go back to club level. He has brought in Bryan to give him experience, and Don. Even if he wasn't selecting me I would feel he was the best."

"We all hope it won't happen, that the FA will say, 'We want you, here's a five-year contract'. He should be there for the next 10 years. It must be nice for an FA guy to sit at Wembley and hear the crowd cheering 'Terry's name and think, 'We have a winner here'."

"It would be brilliant if they could get him to change his mind, it would be the icing on the cake for the European Championships."

Venables constantly says he

has had enough of the speculation, then appears to drop very

gentle hints – like a knowing smile during a recent Sky interview – which suggest he could be persuaded to change his mind.

Yesterday, in response to Gascoigne's comments, he said: "It is very nice of him to say that. I did not know the players felt as strongly as that. But we've

gone through all this before. It's out of my hands and I can't see any way round it."

This is not strictly true. The situation is as much Venables' creation as the FA's. He is, as Gascoigne reflected, 'his own man'. The ostensible reason for his resignation, the series of autumn court cases, are still in

the way. The other reason, the lack of backing from certain members of the FA, also remains but could, at least, be dealt with.

At present the situation is

much as it was in January. Venables is still going but no successor has been appointed. That may change next week,

when Venables is expected to

meet Graham Kelly, the FA's chief executive, to 'discuss the succession', but nothing is likely to be settled until the end of the domestic season.

If the FA followed Gascoigne's advice and offered Venables a long contract, he might well accept it. But they

would also have to be prepared to ride out any storms, from the court cases or the Teddy Sheringham transfer inquiry, which may follow.

Venables will select from a full squad for tomorrow's match at Wembley. Liverpool's Robbie Fowler is expected to be given a full debut in attack.

David Seaman, the Arsenal and England goalkeeper, is to stay at Highbury until the end of the century. "I've agreed a two-year extension to my current contract and that would take me up to 2000," said Seaman, who is set to earn his 23rd cap against Croatia tomorrow.

"I am very happy with the way things are going at Arsenal and it's good for me to have got the contract things out of the way so I can focus on the summer," he said.

The 32-year-old has been the mainstay of the Arsenal defence since his £1.3m move from Queen's Park Rangers six years ago and has now established himself as Terry Venables' first-choice goalkeeper.

Bruce Rioch, the Arsenal manager, recently scrapped the club's flat back four system in the absence of the injured Tony Adams and Steve Bould, which Seaman says was a surprise, but one that has paid off and was the way forward.

"It took courage to do it, because everybody knew our back four and what we'd achieved," he said. "But Martin Keown, Andy Linighan and Scott Marshall have got together and while it means I've had more work to do, more saves to make, it's better for the side because you're creating more at the other end."

Alan Shearer is confident he will be ready to lead the England line in Euro 96, just eight weeks after his groin operation.

The Blackburn striker went into hospital last Thursday and plans to resume training when he returns to Ewood Park. "I'm very optimistic, the operation has gone very well," Shearer said.

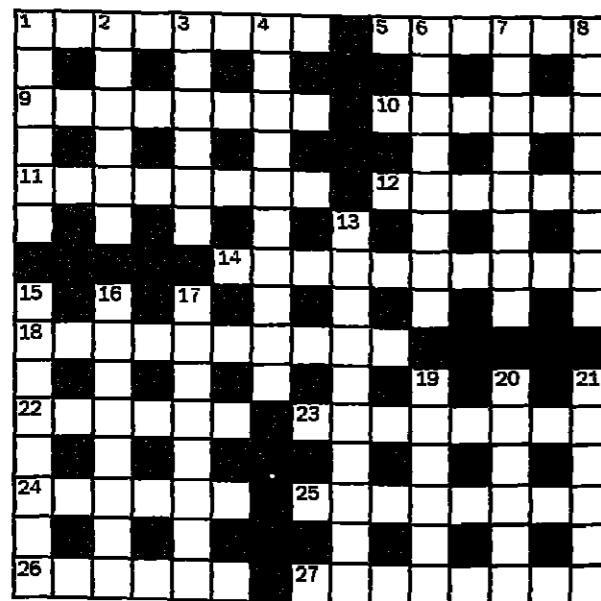
"I'm glad that I went ahead and had it when I did. I know that time is moving on, but my specialists have told me that it looks fine."

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

VINERS OF SHEFFIELD
THE MOST FAMOUS NAME IN CUTLERY

No. 2968, Tuesday 23 April

By Acland



Monday's Solution

MONTHLY INTERVIEW
I U H R A O O
H O T L I N E B U I L D U P
E R K S L L O E
L E A N C I T T E R T U R N
S C I T T E R S E B M
N O M I N E R
S O M E O N E W I L F R E D
S A N D R E L U O
H I L T A E R I E I N F O
A A M C F S I R
R A I M E N T T O P K N I F E
E S G R E F F O
R E I N C A R N A T I O N

Win an exclusive 44-piece Carlton Cutlery Canteen. A contemporary styling in 18/10 stainless steel with a 50 year guarantee.

CALL 0891 311 017

When you have the answers to the first three clues across AND the first three clues down phone 0891 311 017 and leave your answers with your name and daytime telephone number by midnight tonight. Calls cost 35p per minute cheap rate, 49p per minute in other rates. Winners will be selected at random from all correct entries received. No cash alternative. Normal Newspaper Publishing rules apply. Editor's decision is final.

Atherton reappointed as captain against India

Cricket

DEREK PRINGLE

Michael Atherton was yesterday confirmed as England's captain for the Test and one-day series against India. The news came as Atherton was waiting to go in to bat at Old Trafford, where Lancashire were playing Yorkshire in a one-day friendly.

"I'm delighted," he said, when asked about his reappointment. "I feel full of running and refreshed. There are a few new faces about and I'm full of optimism. Hopefully that optimism can be fulfilled."

Quick to dismiss rumours that he had been close to quitting after England's lamentable World Cup, Atherton said: "I felt down, but it didn't take long to get up again."

Insist on right to invest in savings account when it's going up (6)

Monday's Solution

There was a surprise victory for Rod Lawler yesterday in the Embassy World Championship, as he beat John Parrott 10-6 to earn a second-round match against Dave Harold. Parrott became the second top-16 seed out of the first round following Gary Wilkinson's 10-9 defeat of David Roe.

"This has got to be the best result of my career," said Lawler, currently the world No 40. "John said some very complimentary things about the way I played and that was very sporting of him."

shut it off with frivolity. When they do well, his natural modesty forbids him from lauding himself or his team too loudly.

At 28, the Lancashire opener is still determined despite his meagre record of seven wins from 29 Tests in charge. English cricket may be in the doldrums, but they are fortunate to have in Atherton a man not afraid to thrust his bare hands into the nettle bed, knowing full well what the consequences are likely to be.

It is a rare instinct among modern sportsmen, whose tendency towards self-preservation seems inborn. In many respects he is like his predecessor and now co-selector, Graham Gooch. But like him, he will have his saturation point and England will have to start winning if he is to keep his appetite intact. For the moment, he is hungry once more.

Just announced.

Sun's new 'Enterprise' range of servers.

Desktop to mainframe-class scalability. With reliability, network performance, storage capability and sheer speed that will blow your socks off.

Call for our 1-page executive summary.

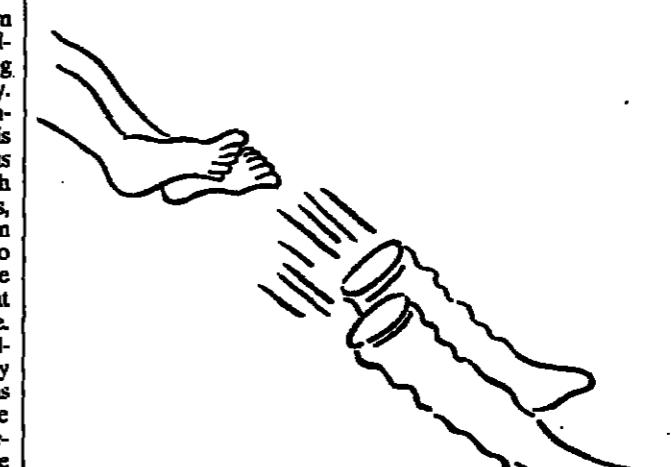
Sum
Australia's Number One

Morse Computers 0181 232 8888

This was the first time in 13 visits to The Crucible that Parrott had failed to clear the opening hurdle. "I've no complaints," he said. "After all, I've scraped a few 10-9s in my time. From 7-6 to 10-6 that's the best I've ever seen. Rod play. He's a hard competitor and if there's 40 or 50 to be had, he'll get them. Now it will be interesting to see just how far he can go."

Parrott began the day 6-3 down, but began well on course to end Lawler's challenge. In 46 minutes, he compiled breaks of 99, 60 and 87 to the the scores at 6-6. However, the 13th frame proved to be unlucky

MORSE



Just announced.

Sun's new 'Enterprise' range of servers.

Desktop to mainframe-class scalability.

With reliability, network performance, storage capability and sheer speed that will blow your socks off.

Call for our 1-page executive summary.

Sum
Australia's Number One

Morse Computers 0181 232 8888

Published by Newspaper Publishing PLC, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, and printed at Mirror Colour Print, St Albans Road, Watford.

Book issue available from Historic Newspapers, 0890 996699.

Today 23 April 1996 Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office

St

Business Leader

Page 24

Page 25

Page 26

Page 27

Page 28

Page 29

Page 30

Page 31

Page 32

Page 33

Page 34

Page 35

Page 36

Page 37